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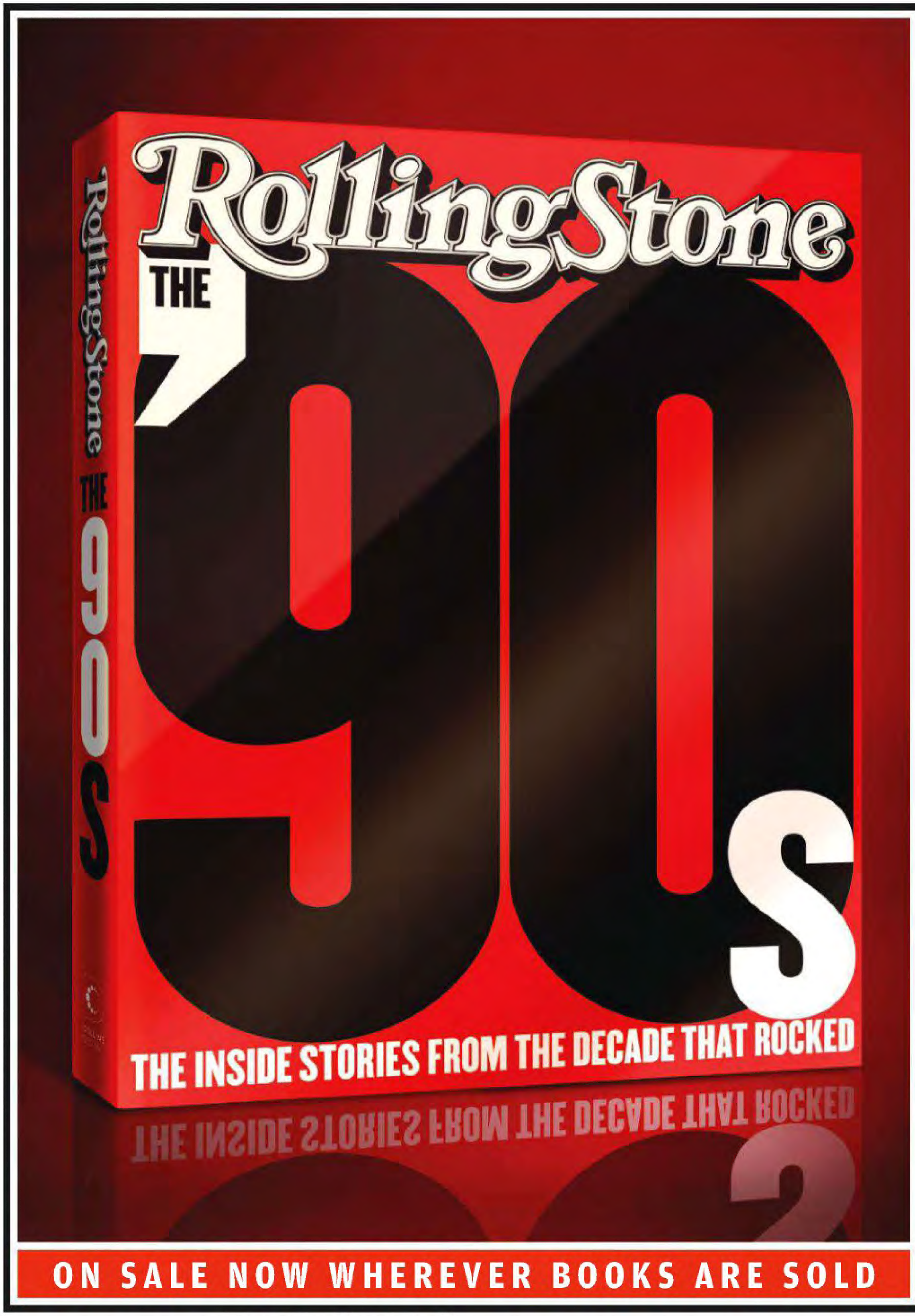

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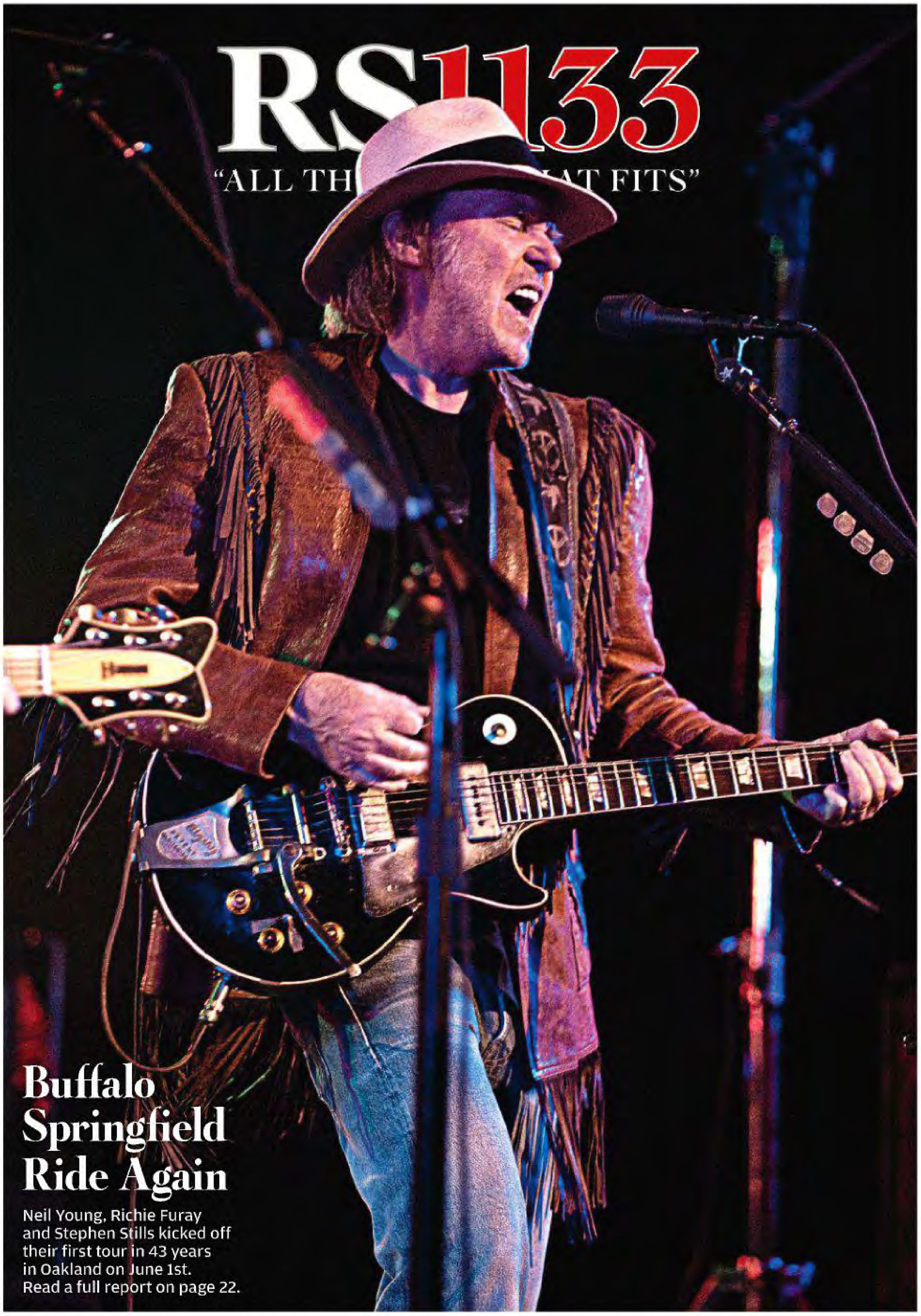

Buffalo Springfield Ride Again

Neil Young, Richie Furay and Stephen Stills kicked off their first tour in 43 years in Oakland on June 1st. Read a full report on page 22.

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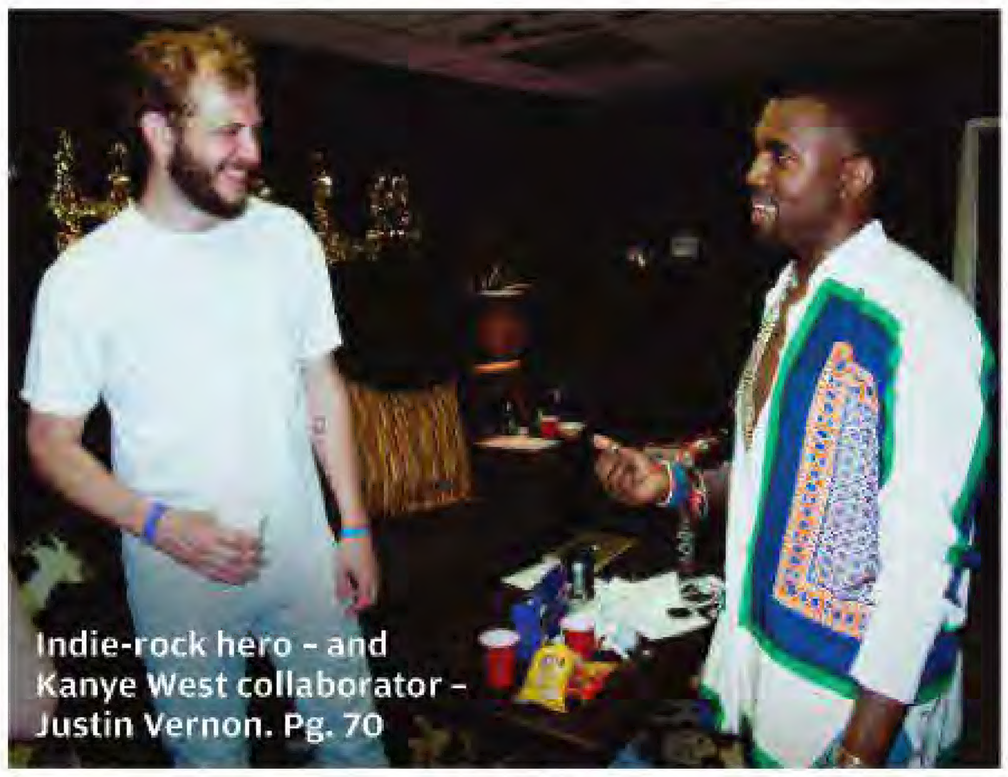

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ON THE COVER Zach Galifianakis photographed in New York on April 23rd, 2011, by **Theo Wenner**.

Styling by Moses at Margaret Maldonado Agency. Hair by James Mooney for Redken at Art Department. Turtleneck by Calvin Klein, sunglasses by Tom Ford.

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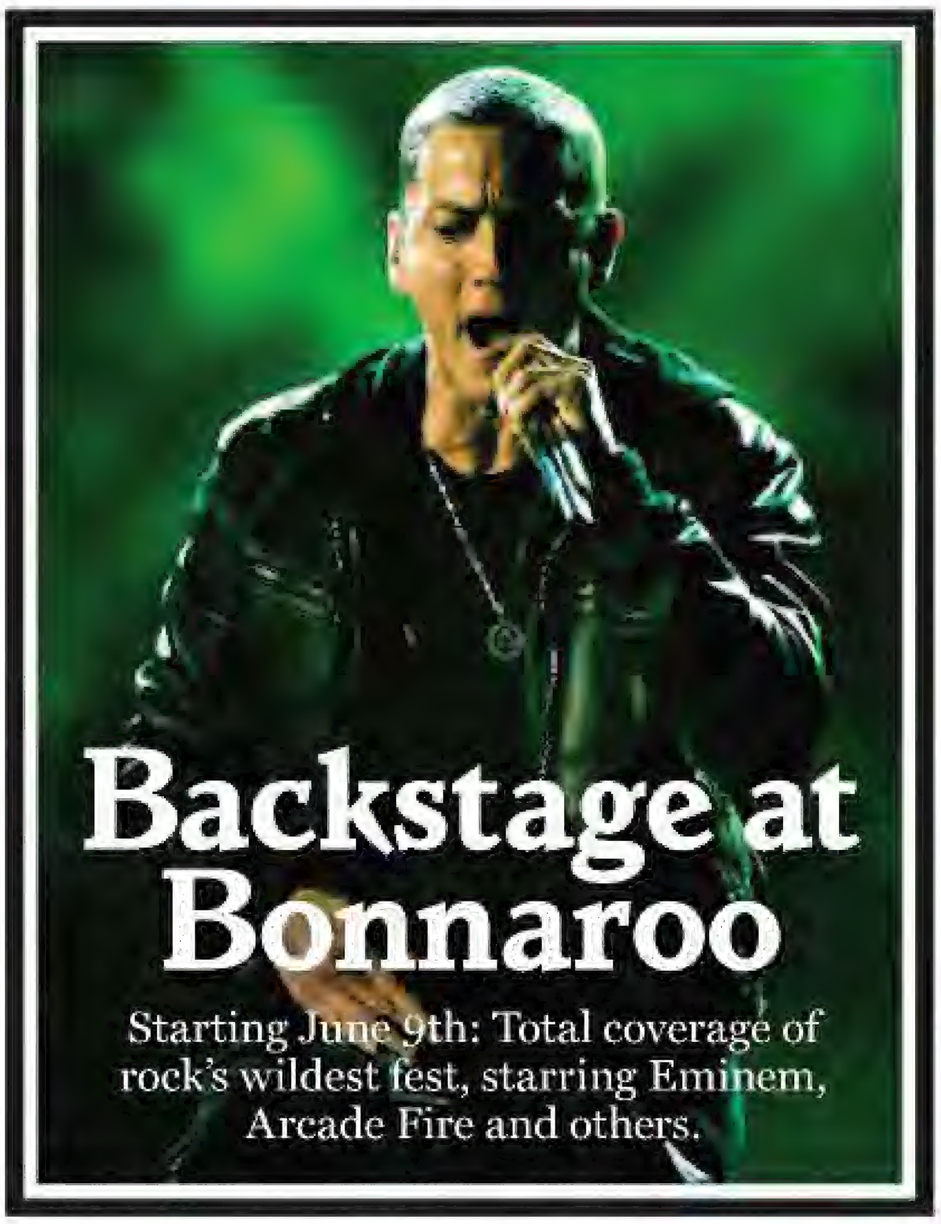

Backstage at Bonnaroo

Starting June 9th: Total coverage of rock's wildest fest, starring Eminem, Arcade Fire and others.

CHOOSE THE COVER:

The Finals!

And then there were two: L.A. singer Lelia Broussard or Canadian rockers the Sheepdogs will be on an upcoming cover of ROLLING STONE. Vote for your favorite at RS.com, and check out their sets at Bonnaroo.

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Rockers Hit the Beach

Katy Perry on the Road

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The Cars Return

The reunited 1980s New Wave band talks about its new disc, tour and plans for Lollapalooza.

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Gary Busey Loses It

Our favorite *Celebrity Apprentice* contestant revisits his Buddy Holly days – and recounts his struggles with drugs.

VIDEO

Idols Visit 'Rolling Stone'

Scotty McCreery and Lauren Alaina discuss their wild ride.

VIDEO

My Morning Jacket

Jim James and crew take you deep into their new LP, *Circuital*, and talk about some of their favorite cuts on the disc.

READER LIST

Greatest Summer Songs

Your picks of the best fair-weather jams, including tracks by the Lovin' Spoonful, Sly and the Family Stone (above), and DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince.

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Essential Dylan

THANK YOU FOR THE 70 Greatest Dylan Songs issue [RS 1131] in celebration of Bob's 70th birthday. For music lovers, these retrospectives are so meaningful. As Bono says, "I love to hear a song that changes everything."

Suzanne Bracken, Mahopac, NY

YOUR 70TH BIRTHDAY PARTY for Dylan was an immense pleasure. Dylan channels his lyrics from some kind of astral plane. Other artists give us paint-by-numbers in primary colors, but Dylan gives us the Sistine Chapel.

Whitney A. Strus
Via the Internet

I LOVED THE ISSUE DEVOTED to Bob Dylan. His astonishing genius continues to be a gift to us all, and it's always fascinating to read about him. But I have to ask: Out of 24 contributors invited to reflect on Dylan's work, you could find only three women with something to say on the subject? What year is this?

Kristine McKenna
Los Angeles

AFTER READING YOUR LIST of the 70 greatest Dylan songs, I made up my own list of songs that I thought were excluded. Then I read it again and came to the conclusion that no matter how you look at it, they're all masterpieces. Dylan is truly our living Shakespeare!

Dave Venet, Somerdale, NJ

LOVED THE BIRTHDAY GIFT to Dylan. But come on – only three songs recorded since 1990 make the top 70? That's just bizarre.

John Averill, Catonsville, MD

AH, RS, YOUR ICONIC COVER of Dylan has settled it. I forgive you for Snooki and Justin Bieber! With Adele, Steven Tyler and now the legendary Bob Dylan, I can see you really do care. Let's never fight again. Can we have hot make-up sex now?

Kaitlyn Child, Cedar City, UT

Goldman's Lies

I WANT TO THANK "ROLLING Stone" and Matt Taibbi for his tenacity in exposing the perverse lies of Goldman Sachs ["The People vs. Goldman Sachs," RS 1131]. I hope your example will inspire other journalists to do some honest work.

Ronald B. Dozier, Cordova, TN

IF YOU ASK MOST PEOPLE what kind of government the U.S. has, they'll naturally say, "A democracy." However, the dictionary defines a plutocracy as "the rule or control of society by the wealthy." If Goldman is not tried and found guilty, then it will be official: We will have to start teaching the latter type of government in our schools. Even sadder, I wonder if anyone will notice. When will Taibbi's articles be discussed on national news, or *The New York Times*? Nothing is more important than this.

Andy Crispin, Ann Arbor, MI

TAIBBI'S ARTICLE MADE ME so angry that I woke up the next morning thinking, "Why aren't these people in jail? Why are their friends in my government? How in the name of everything we supposedly stand for aren't these criminals being prosecuted?"

Stacey Snyder, Ocean City, NJ

ALL I COULD THINK OF AT the end of your article on Goldman Sachs were the lyrics from a Bob Dylan song: "Steal a little and they throw you in jail/Steal a lot and they make you king."

Woody Filley
Via the Internet

VICTOR JUHASZ'S CARICATURE of the Goldman banker is one of the funniest and most dead-on I've ever seen. And Taibbi does it again – provoking more gut-wrenching thought.

Carmen Trunk, Fort Myers, FL

"LYING SACHS." BEST. HEADline. Ever.

Michael Salkind
Colorado Springs, CO

"Other artists give us paint-by-numbers in primary colors, but Dylan gives us the Sistine Chapel."

Ten Years of War

HALLELUJAH, MICHAEL Hastings! Your article "The Bin Laden Decade" [RS 1131] states with amazing clarity how our leaders in Washington use any excuse to throw us all into a war. Even if we are not soldiers in the battlefield, we all pay the price. All Americans should stand up right now and scream and shout for peace.

Tina Munroe, Hogansville, GA

Trump Card

FIRST RICKY GERVAIS, THEN Donald Trump ["Donald Lets His Hair Down," RS 1131]? Whose dog did Erik Hedegaard run over with his car to get assigned interviews with all these delightful chaps? And when is RS sending him to Charlie Sheen's place?

Adam Shafer, Oak Park, IL

What They're Saying The buzz about "The People vs. Goldman Sachs" [RS 1131]

MATT TAIBBI'S ARTICLE PRESENTED such a devastating case against the investment bank Goldman Sachs that it reignited the debate over whether indictments should be handed down. Dan Gibson of *Tucson Weekly* called it "important, dynamic journalism." Sam Seder, the host of radio's *Majority Report*, praised Taibbi for being one of "the only people in the country who were paying attention." The piece also had a deeper impact for the bank: the bottom line. Goldman's stock plummeted after Wall Street analyst Richard Bove downgraded the company to a "sell" and cited Taibbi's "all-out attack" as a reason. As *The Wall Street Journal* put it, "The Vampire Squid is off nearly five percent today. It can't be the new Taibbi piece, can it?"

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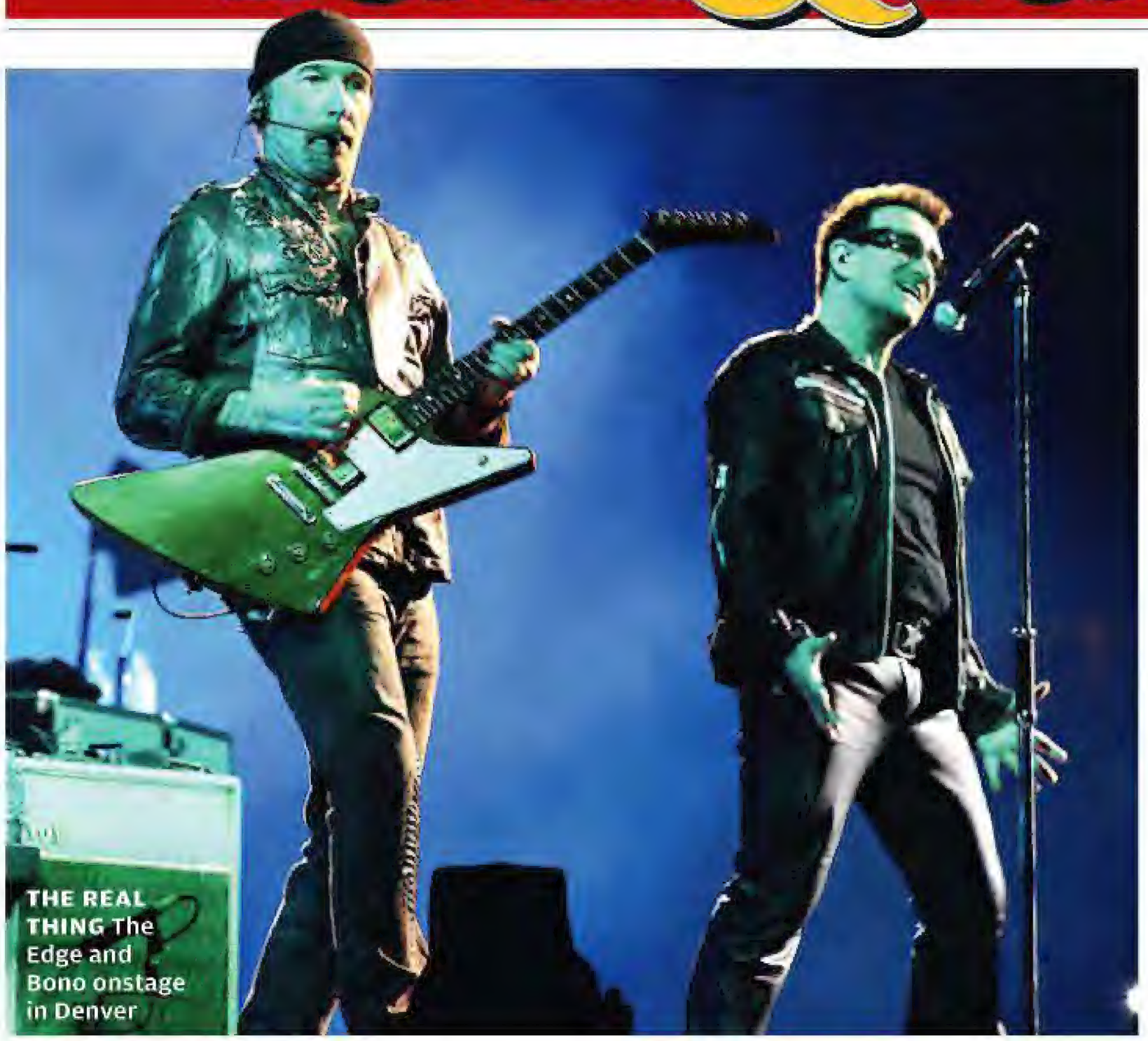

THE REAL THING The Edge and Bono onstage in Denver

SUSAN ETTER/INFEVENTS.COM

Back in the USA: U2 Return for Victory Lap

Behind the scenes on the 360° Tour's final leg. Plus: Inside the next album

By Brian Hiatt

AFTER U2 CLATTERED through a sped-up, revamped version of "Magnificent" at the kickoff of the final leg of their 360° Tour, Bono smiled and offered an apology to the Denver crowd: "It's in development, that one," he said of a song they've played more than 100 times over the past two years. With 7 million fans in attendance, the 360° Tour is the most successful of all time, beating the Rolling Stones' record with a $700 million gross.

But with fewer than 20 dates to go, the band still considers it a work in progress. "We'd like to get it to the place that we want it to be," says the Edge. "The final one or two shows, I'm sure, is where we'll fully realize the 360° Tour. This show is still being born, even if it's two years in."

After the band flies to Vegas following the Denver show, Bono dashes over to an elliptical machine set up in his hotel room and gives it a little hug: "Hi, honey, I'm home," he says, cackling. He feels lucky to be able to work out – and to walk without a limp, for that matter. The current U.S. and Canadian dates were scheduled for last summer, until Bono needed surgery for a serious back injury. "There were some terrible things that could have happened," he says. He's fully recovered, but the tour has now gone on so long that multiple members of the crew have conceived and given birth to babies during its run.

With so much time to evolve, the set list is dramatically different from what U.S. audiences last saw, in 2009. Instead of the *No Line on the Horizon* track "Breathe," the show now starts with a blazing "Even Better Than the Real Thing." U2 are preparing to celebrate the 20th [*Cont. on 18*]

Music Rules Prime-Time TV

Why TV's biggest shows are packed with music's hottest stars

By Steve Knopper

WHEN AEROSMITH'S Steven Tyler joined the judges' table on *American Idol* this year, he kicked open the doors of prime-time network TV for music megastars everywhere. Suddenly, the biggest names in music are showing up onscreen – sometimes all at once, as when Bono, the Edge, Lady Gaga and Beyoncé guest-starred on the May 25th *Idol* finale. Even punk legend Iggy Pop made it to *Idol* this season for a smirking, bare-chested, J.Lo-flirting performance of "Real Wild Child." "You see Steven Tyler and respectable, credible artists that are participating," says Marsha Vlasic, Pop's agent. "The times have changed a bit, and artists aren't thinking it's cheesy."

That might be because they're thinking instead about the massive audiences they can reach on prime-time TV. *Idol*'s all-star finale drew more than 29 million viewers; NBC's *The Voice* (starring judges Christina Aguilera, Adam Levine, Cee Lo Green and Blake Shelton) gets 10 million; and *Glee* is still a force, with more than 9 million per show. "Music is everywhere!" says Iain Pirie, president of *Idol* production company, 19 Entertainment. "It's easy to get down- [*Cont. on 20*]

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Bono and the Edge Reboot 'Spider-Man'

"I believe in these tunes," Bono says of Broadway show

Bono, the Edge and *Spider-Man* star Reeve Carney

Wide-awake at 2 a.m., Bono is riding in an SUV to a Las Vegas hotel – but he doesn't need a casino to make a huge, risky bet. After the $65 million *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark* was hammered by catastrophically bad reviews in February ("It may also rank among the worst" musicals of all time, *The New York Times* wrote), he and the Edge could have cut their losses and backed away. Instead, the duo behind the show's music have done the opposite, associating themselves more closely than ever with the project, even as director Julie Taymor stepped down from day-to-day control. "It's really dangerous," says Bono. "It is doubling down, but I really believe in these tunes; I really believe in the creative team."

Bono and the Edge pushed for a revamp of the show, radically shifting its second act to try to make the plot more coherent. They cut songs and wrote the gleefully campy dance-pop tune "A Freak Like Me Needs Company," sung by crowd favorite Patrick Page as the villain Green Goblin. The song sounds like the Grinch singing Lady Gaga, with an Abba-esque chorus, and it's now an undeniable high point. "It's a shame we didn't have it earlier," says the Edge, "but we wouldn't have known what to write until we actually saw the thing set up."

They also moved ahead with an album – *Music From Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*, out June 14th – plus an *American Idol* performance with the show's lead, Reeve Carney. The album mixes recordings by the show's stars with demos and newly recorded Bono and Edge tracks, all produced by longtime U2 associate Steve Lillywhite. "We feel that our music didn't really get a fair shake in the early reviews," says the Edge, "along with the costume and set designs, which are fantastic. So many things that were great got trashed with the story and other things that probably did deserve to be criticized. So we thought, 'Let's just get the songs out there – if people got a chance to hear it, they won't be swayed by these negative reviews.'"

The media – and late-night comedians – were quick to mock *Turn Off the Dark*, which was also plagued by multiple cast injuries from its high-flying stunts. "The Edge is probably not used to so much custard pie," says Bono. "I am, and I quite enjoy it in some sick way. If we weren't in a corner, we'd paint ourselves into one. That seems to be who we are. I love the chaos – you have to put order on it." The duo have found plenty to enjoy in the process, and, Bono jokes, they've learned some new things about themselves: "Being in a band with Edge for all these years, to discover he's gay now is just wonderful. He's so into these dance routines. Who knew?"

With the show's endlessly delayed opening now set for June 14th, there are signs that the rescue mission could work. The audience greeted one recent Friday-night performance with a standing ovation. "Every show has had that in the new version," says Carney, "which makes us feel so good." BRIAN HIATT

U2: THE 360° TOUR

[*Cont. from 17*] anniversary of *Achtung Baby* in the fall, so they're in a Nineties mood – "I'm blown away by how productive and creative that time was," says the Edge. They've also added the rarely played "Zooropa" and even a welcome snippet of "Discotheque."

U2 are happiest about a change involving the Burmese leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who had been placed under house arrest by that country's military regime for 15 years: Each night during "Walk On," the band would make a dramatic call for her release – and in November 2010, she won her freedom. Now, in a video freshly shot in Burma, Aung San Suu Kyi herself addresses the crowd before "One" (Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who previously had that slot, popped up during "Magnificent"). "If you demand it, change will come," she says. "It starts with just one person. One."

Even as it embarked on the biggest tour ever, the band was trying to record a new album, and Bono and the Edge were also trying to save their troubled *Spider-Man* Broadway musical (see above). "Our drug of choice in this band is doing really difficult things," says Bono. Longtime manager Paul McGuinness puts it more simply: "The expression is to bite off more than you can chew," he says. Bono acknowledges that a new U2 album probably got snagged in the web. "But we don't tell Larry and Adam that," he says with a laugh. "It's not like songwriting has stopped. We're crushing tunes every day."

"Our drug of choice in this band is doing really difficult things," says Bono.

It wasn't until early this year that the group abandoned the idea of getting an album out before the end of the tour, after working on separate sets of songs with Lady Gaga producer RedOne and Danger Mouse. "We had to have a meeting and look at the schedule to see if we could pick up any extra time to work on it," says Adam Clayton, "and we just realized that we couldn't. To be honest, everyone was a bit gutted. But it was the only sensible decision."

When the tour ends, the three 150-foot-high stage sets that the band has been dragging around will survive: McGuinness has been negotiating to "recycle" them as permanent event spaces around the world. The band will return to the studio, with the expectation of releasing an album toward the end of next year, most likely from the Danger Mouse sessions. "We have to focus on what we do best, and the work we did with Danger Mouse came closest to that," says Clayton. "We want to be in the clubs and make pop music as well as the thing U2 does, but in the end, the thing we did with RedOne doesn't feel like the right fit."

U2 are looking forward to moving on. "It's making me giddy," says Bono, "the idea that this thing will be over in August. I will be sad to say goodbye to the space station, but I'm very excited about the free time to finish these songs." How about some rest? "I'm not tired at all," says Bono, taking a gulp of beer. "But I'm looking forward to, as Johnny Cash said, 'Walking barefoot in my yard.'"

EXCLUSIVE VIDEO
U2 take you deep inside the last leg of the 360° Tour at rollingstone.com/videos.

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MUSIC ON PRIME TIME

1

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Big on TV

(1) Cee Lo, Adam Levine, Christina Aguilera and Blake Shelton on *The Voice*. Iggy Pop rocked *Idol* (2) and Lady Gaga played the finale (3).

[*Cont. from 17*] hearted with record sales in decline, but when you see the success of music programming on television, it's because music resonates with people so much."

Even shows that have nothing to do with music are getting in on the act by using buzzy pre-release tunes in their soundtracks: Before their latest albums, My Morning Jacket placed a song on an episode of *House* and the Vaccines landed one on *Gossip Girl*. "It seems pretty unprecedented," says Tom Mackay, executive vice president of Universal Republic Records, which is working with *The Voice*'s contestants. "We're in a period of time where network prime-time television is a huge catalyst for awareness of artists and songs, and it is a huge, huge platform for us."

While TV has always been a powerful medium for breaking artists and boosting sales, it's become far more important in recent years as radio's traditional ability to play those roles has faded. And so far, the music industry's bet on prime time is paying off. The *Glee* cast has sold 11.5 million digital singles, and artists from Madonna to Journey, whose music appears on the show, have seen turbocharged catalog sales and publishing royalties. Tyler's *Idol* exposure helped his memoir hit Number Two on *The New York Times*' bestseller lists in May, and after Levine joined *The Voice* in April, his band Maroon 5's digital-single sales doubled from the week before the show to its second week on the air. Some of the biggest profits happen when *Idol* or *Glee* themes an entire episode around one artist. "When they're doing Elton John night or Stevie Wonder night on one of those shows, you're buying your third house, if you're the publisher," says Lyle Hysen, owner of Bank Robber Music, which licenses songs to TV shows. "That's like the mother lode."

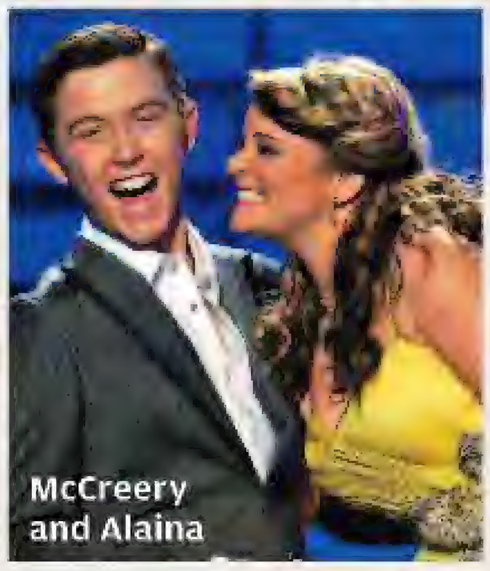
The current wave of music on TV began when *Idol* debuted on Fox in June 2002. The show quickly soared to Number One and has dominated ratings since, laying the groundwork for *Glee* and *The Voice*. "The cultural mainstream, which is talent-competition shows, coincided with an explosion in people's understanding in music," says Paul Telegdy, NBC's executive vice president for alternative programming. The field continues to expand, with Simon Cowell's long-awaited U.S. version of *The X Factor* and Jennifer Lopez's Latin-American talent search, *Q'Viva*, due later this year – providing two more places for A-list guests to promote their latest projects on prime-time TV.

These days, it's rare to find a rock star who won't do TV. When Kings of Leon and Foo Fighters refused to license their songs to *Glee* last year, it made headlines. And while Paul McCartney reportedly snubbed an invitation from Cowell to appear on *Idol* in 2008, he's changed his tune – last year, he personally asked *Glee* creator Ryan Murphy to feature his music on the show. "When *Idol* launched, people had a certain preconception about it," says Pirie. "But as the years have gone on, they've become more open. Artists have seen the power of television."

'Idol' Country Champs

Can they do better than the show's past two winners?

Scotty McCreery knows exactly why he won *American Idol*'s 10th season. "Country fans, they're loyal," says the husky-voiced North Carolina native, 17, who was joined in the final two by fellow country crooner Lauren Alaina, 16. "They stuck by me and Lauren's side the whole way through." But will they stay loyal now that the season has ended? "The thing about *Idol* is, even though it is a huge launchpad for a music career, once the show is over they face the same challenges as every other artist," says Iain Pirie, president of *Idol* production company 19 Entertainment. The past two winners, Lee DeWyze and Kris Allen, found out the hard way, with underwhelming post-show sales. *Idol* producers revitalized ratings this year by adding flamboyant new judges Steven Tyler and Jennifer Lopez, and by giving more screen time to mentors like Interscope chair Jimmy Iovine – behind the scenes, Interscope replaced Sony as *Idol*'s major-label partner. Now the label is moving fast to keep momentum up, sending McCreery and Alaina to Nashville this month to begin work on albums due later this year. "There's not a great deal of confusion about what kind of record Scotty should make," says Pirie. McCreery, who heads out on tour with the other contestants on July 6th, agrees: "I'm just going to sing what I've been singing. Good old country music." **SIMON VOZICK-LEVINSON**


McCreery and Alaina

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: LEWIS JACOBS/NBC; FRANK MICELOTTA/FOX/PICTUREGROUP; CHRIS PIZZELLO/AP IMAGES; MICHAEL BECKER/FOX/PICTUREGROUP

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SOUL SURVIVORS Stills, Furay and Young (from left)

Blast From the Past: Buffalo Springfield Ride Again

★★★★½
Fox Theater, Oakland
June 1st

"THANK YOU, WE'RE BUFfalo Springfield," Neil Young announced early in the band's June 1st show at the Fox Theater in Oakland, the opening date of the Springfield's first tour since the spring of 1968. "We're from the past," he added drily.

They were not stuck in it. For two hours, Buffalo Springfield's surviving members – Young and singer-guitarists Stephen Stills and Richie Furay – played like a band genuinely reborn: thrilled to be onstage again, determined not to let their songs or legacy down. There was jubilant fraternity in the close-harmony singing, especially by Young and Furay in the soft vocal rain at the end of "On the Way Home" and their gleaming Morse-code flourishes behind Stills' grainy tenor in "Rock & Roll Woman."

There was also nerve. After a 15-song set that ranged through "Hot Dusty Roads" and "Everybody's Wrong," a pair of gritty Stills numbers from deep inside the 1966 debut LP, *Buffalo Springfield*, Young opened the encore by leading the group through "Broken Arrow," his epic frontier daydream at the end of 1967's *Buffalo Springfield Again*. Recorded by Young as a solo piece, it was never performed live in the Springfield's first lifetime. Tonight, the song featured Stills at the piano, Furay flying next to Young in the chorus harmonies and its original honky-tonk coda. This was more than a resurrection – it was a kind of justice, the way the Springfield would have recorded Young's suite if they hadn't been so busy falling apart at the time.

Formed in the spring of 1966, the original Springfield – with bassist Bruce Palmer (who died in 2004) and drummer Dewey Martin (who passed away in 2009) – played their last show in May 1968. In between, they were one of the most gifted and fractious bands of their day, better known for their precedents – the strong early whiff of country in their rock – and aftermaths: Crosby, Stills and Nash; Furay's twang-rock band Poco; Young's solo triumphs and eccentricities.

At the Fox, Young, Furay and Stills were supported by the strong, steady drive of drummer Joe Vitale and bassist Rick Rosas, the rhythm section from the Springfield's reunion debut last fall at Young's Bridge School Benefit. The set also reprised the songs from that show, including Furay's "A Child's Claim to Fame," the strident jangle of Stills' "Go and Say Goodbye" and Young's plaintive "Burned."

Some of the most striking moments came in the way they readdressed their younger selves: the addition of Young's mourning-Seventies harmonica in "I Am a Child"; the Crazy Horse fuzz on his guitar in "Mr. Soul"; how he traded verses in "Nowadays Clancy Can't Even Sing" with Furay, lead vocalist on the original recording. In the final encores – Stills' '67 hit about L.A. martial law, "For What It's Worth," and Young's furious update of America at war with itself, "Rockin' in the Free World" – the two guitarists cranked up the outrage, Young spiking the former with tremolo-shiver shrieks, Stills taking a verse in the latter with a ragged-vocal fury. This was music from the past. But as they embraced it tonight, it never sounded more alive.

DAVID FRICKE

IN THE NEWS

Apple readies cloud music service

Following Amazon and Google, Apple is launching its own online-music-storage service. The company's iCloud service – expected at press time to be announced at a June 6th conference – will let users store music on an Apple server, then access the content on laptops, tablets and phones. Apple enters the market with a running start: iTunes is the world's biggest music store. And its cloud service is likely to be sleeker than Google's and Amazon's, providing immediate access to songs you own by matching them to copies already stored on Apple servers – saving substantial uploading time. "Our understanding is that it's quicker, more streamlined and has higher quality," says RCA executive vice president Tom Corson. "You'll have almost instant access to your library. That's the holy grail."

Lady Gaga sells 1.1 million albums in a week

Lady Gaga's *Born This Way* shattered early projections, selling 1.1 million copies in its first week – more than any artist has managed since 50 Cent's *The Massacre* in 2005.

Lady Gaga

A record 662,000 were digital sales, many of them from an Amazon.com promotion offering the full album for 99 cents. (Amazon paid a standard wholesale fee to Gaga's label, losing about $7 per sale.) Asked if she felt that her album was worth more than 99 cents, Gaga recently said, "No, I absolutely do not, especially for MP3s. I applaud a company like Amazon for giving the opportunity to everyone to buy music."

The Who prep massive 'Quadrophenia' box

Pete Townshend is assembling a deluxe edition of the Who's 1973 rock opera, *Quadrophenia*, for a planned October release. "I am sitting in a pile of notes, desk diaries,

Townshend

photos, original lyrics and writing liner notes," Townshend wrote on the Who's website. "My demos are among the best I've ever done, and include some real quirky tracks that didn't make it onto the final album."

FROM TOP: © JAY BLAKESBERG; JACKSON LEE/SPLASH NEWS; KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE

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Faster, Stronger: The Black Keys Return

The Keys and producer Danger Mouse up the tempo for seventh disc

TRIPLE THREAT Carney, Auerbach and Burton (from left) at Easy Eye in Nashville

LAST AUGUST, SINGER-guitarist Dan Auerbach of the Black Keys moved from Akron, Ohio, the duo's hometown, to Nashville. By October, he had bought a bland-looking one-story building near a freeway overpass and was renovating it into his own studio, Easy Eye Sound. In March, Auerbach and drummer Patrick Carney, who also settled in Nashville, started work there on a new Black Keys album with Brian Burton, the producer better known as Danger Mouse.

IN THE STUDIO

That record – the follow-up to 2010's *Brothers*, the Keys' first gold album – is almost done, although they probably won't release it until early next year. "We just have vocals to do," Auerbach says on a mid-May afternoon, sitting with Carney on a couch in Easy Eye's lounge. "We have 13 songs done. I think we'll have 11 on the record."

"Every record, we figure out the mood and stick with that," adds Carney. "With *Brothers*, we were listening to a lot of hip-hop and old R&B and drawing from that." Recently, the Keys have been spinning the Stones, the Cramps and Creedence. "This is the first record we've made where it's *all* rock & roll," Carney says.

In the control room, Auerbach and Carney preview four songs, still in rough mixes. "Lonely Boy" and "Stop Stop" are brisk and loaded with crusty distortion; there are hand claps and the tingle of a celeste, too, over the latter's clanging rhythm. "Mind Eraser" has the cocky-funk swagger of the Stones circa *Some Girls*. And "Dead and Gone" has a guitar/drums charge that suggests the garage pop of Elvis Costello's "Pump It Up" steeped in the dirty-blues mayhem of the Black Keys' 2002 debut, *The Big Come Up*.

"It only took us 10 years to figure out how to make our records sound fucked up in the right way," Auerbach says as Carney plays air drums at a vintage 16-track mixing desk. "We also have all this Pro-Tools hocus-pocus, but we're limiting ourselves to the basics: Hammond organ, Farfisa, bass, guitars and drums. We want the instruments to sound classic."

"This is the first record we've made where it's *all* rock & roll," Carney says.

The afternoon's real work begins with the half-blues, half-ballad "Little Black Submarines." Auerbach is putting a new bass overdub on the track. "Do more of what you did on the first chorus in the second one," Burton says, referring to a lick Auerbach played on an earlier take.

But Burton and the Keys start doubting the pace and feel of the rhythm. "It sticks out, because everything else on the album is so fast," Carney says. He joins Auerbach in the live room, and they strip the song to its bare bones for rearranging. Auerbach sings with an acoustic guitar. Carney works on that moody shuffle as Burton sits with them, head down, listening intently.

Asked how the Keys have changed since Burton produced 2008's *Attack and Release*, the producer replies, "They're better." He smiles. "No, really. They've made a lot of music since then. It shows in what they write and how they play it."

The Keys made their first two albums in Carney's Akron basement, then cut 2004's *Rubber Factory* in an old tire factory on a mixing board that once belonged to the Eighties band Loverboy. "It was such a piece of shit," Auerbach says, that the Keys left it in the factory when they were done: "We went back a year or two ago, and it was still there."

The Keys feel at home in Nashville. Jack White's Third Man headquarters is a short drive from Easy Eye, but he and Auerbach have never met. Auerbach likes the warm weather and the possibilities. He has produced records for young bands like Hacienda and Cadillac Sky, and foresees doing more of that at Easy Eye. "Although now that I have all my stuff here, it's going to be hard to rent it out to someone, because everything means something to me," Auerbach says, looking around Easy Eye with a smile. "I'm going to have to figure that out."

DAVID FRICKE

ERIKA GOLDRING/GETTY IMAGES

Photograph by Jo McCaughey

STUDIO NOTES

Avett Brothers reunite with Rubin
The North Carolina folk-rock crew is deep in sessions for its follow-up to 2009's *I and Love and You*, produced again by Rick Rubin. "We've recorded 24 songs, and there's plenty more where that came from," says singer Scott Avett. Highlights include the uptempo "Once and Future Carpenter." "We've been very fortunate to meet a friend like Rick," says Avett. "It's been a real good, natural process."

Scott Avett

Green Day get back to work on new LP
Following Billie Joe Armstrong's Broadway run in *American Idiot*, Green Day are back in the studio. "GD has been jamming new songs every day," Armstrong wrote on Twitter. "The direction is fresh and hi-energy."

Christina Aguilera plots next move
Between shooting episodes of *The Voice*, Aguilera has begun her seventh LP. "I'm diving in now," she said. "I have so much great material coming from the crazy year I've had."

Blink-182 Blast Back With Summer Shows and New LP

The reunited punk-pop crew races to finish recording before tour

BRAT ATTACK Blink's Hoppus (left) and DeLonge

BLINK-182 ARE STILL working on their first new album since 2003, but fans will get a preview of what the reunited punk-pop trio have been up to this August, when the band kicks off a tour with My Chemical Romance starting in Holmdel, New Jersey. "That's what we're most excited about," says drummer Travis Barker. "It's the first new music we've had to play in years."

The band is planning on continuing to record in Los Angeles and San Diego right up through the beginning of the tour. "We have until July 31st to hand the record in," says singer-bassist Mark Hoppus. "I think we'll use every single day until then." (The title and release date remain TBD.) One new tune that Hoppus says might make the summer set list is the revved, punky "Heart's All Gone," and other contenders are piling up fast. "We thought we were closing in on the end, and literally a week ago we pumped out a whole set of stuff that I think will be some of the best on the album," says singer-guitarist Tom DeLonge. "Recording is never really finished. You slide or limp into home base."

Blink and My Chemical Romance gathered to announce the tour on May 23rd at West Hollywood's notorious Rainbow Bar and Grill, a hard-rock hangout on the Sunset Strip going back to the hard-partying days of Keith Moon and Led Zeppelin – and where Motörhead's Lemmy Kilmister can still usually be found at the end of the bar. "It was rad," says Hoppus. "I was looking at all the pictures on the walls. A lot of history there. Lots of long hair."

The band is stepping up its live act from what fans may remember. "In the early days, we just wanted to play as fast as we could, make jokes and have a great time," says Hoppus. "Now, we actually want to play well." Adds DeLonge, "That said, I could get up there and still make a really bad dick joke."

With the album nearly done and the tour kickoff approaching, the intraband acrimony that led to Blink-182's long hiatus has become a distant memory. Even so, the group is aware that those tensions helped fuel the fruitful sessions for its last album, 2003's *blink-182*. "I want to find that same angst and push songs in new and cool directions," Hoppus says. "But not have the band implode."

STEVE APPLEFORD

IN THE NEWS

Coachella expands to two weekends

In an effort to accommodate increased demand for tickets, next April's Coachella festival will roll out over two consecutive weekends in Indio, California. While the lineup has not yet been announced, both events will feature the same artists. "We will attempt to produce two identical festival weekends," festival organizers said. "That means same lineup, same art, same place, different people."

Beatles 'Anthology' comes to iTunes

The outtakes, demos and new recordings from the Beatles' mid-Nineties *Anthology* series have been remastered for digital release starting June 14th. iTunes will offer the *Anthology* in several configurations, including a comprehensive 155-track collection and a 23-track highlights set.

Smithsonian acquires Parliament Mothership

George Clinton has donated the massive Mothership prop from **Parliament Funkadelic**'s live shows to the Smithsonian's new National Museum of African American History and Culture. The 1,200-pound aluminum spacecraft – commissioned by Clinton in the Nineties to replace the original 1976 Mothership – will be displayed along with signature items owned by **Michael Jackson** and **James Brown** when the museum opens in 2015. Says project historian Kevin Strait, "It's one of the most iconic props in African-American musical history."

Clinton

Judas Priest Plot Monster Farewell Tour, New Album

Inside the British metal gods' plans for one last big trek

Judas Priest are going out with a bang this fall. "We're pulling out all the stops," singer Rob Halford says of the U.K. metal giants' last-ever world tour, whose U.S. leg will hit 22 cities, starting with San Antonio on October 12th. "We've built a brand-new stage set, we've got all the effects that people love us for – the lasers, the fire, the bombs, the smoke, the bike. It's a full-on metal extravaganza." New guitarist Richie Faulkner will join them in place of founding member K.K. Downing, who retired from Judas Priest in April, citing "an ongoing breakdown in working relationship." "Richie does his own thing that fits in so well with Priest," says guitarist Glenn Tipton. "I honestly believe that if we hadn't found him, we would have hung up the hat." But while this will be their final time touring on such a huge scale, they definitely aren't breaking up. "It's not like we've hit a red light," says Halford. "We're going to take things a little easier." Adds Tipton, "We've been [touring] for 40 years now or close to it, and we all love that moment onstage, but it's difficult to be away from home. Now, if somebody said, 'Would you do a small string of dates?' we wouldn't automatically say no." After the tour, their first order of business is finishing their 17th album for release next summer. "The fans are going to get something they thoroughly enjoy – big riffs, real strong vocal melodies, some screaming *Painkiller* vibes," says Halford. "We wanted to make at least one more great metal album."

GREG PRATO

Halford (left) and Tipton

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: TABATHA FIREMAN/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES; JASON MERRITT/GETTY IMAGES; KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES

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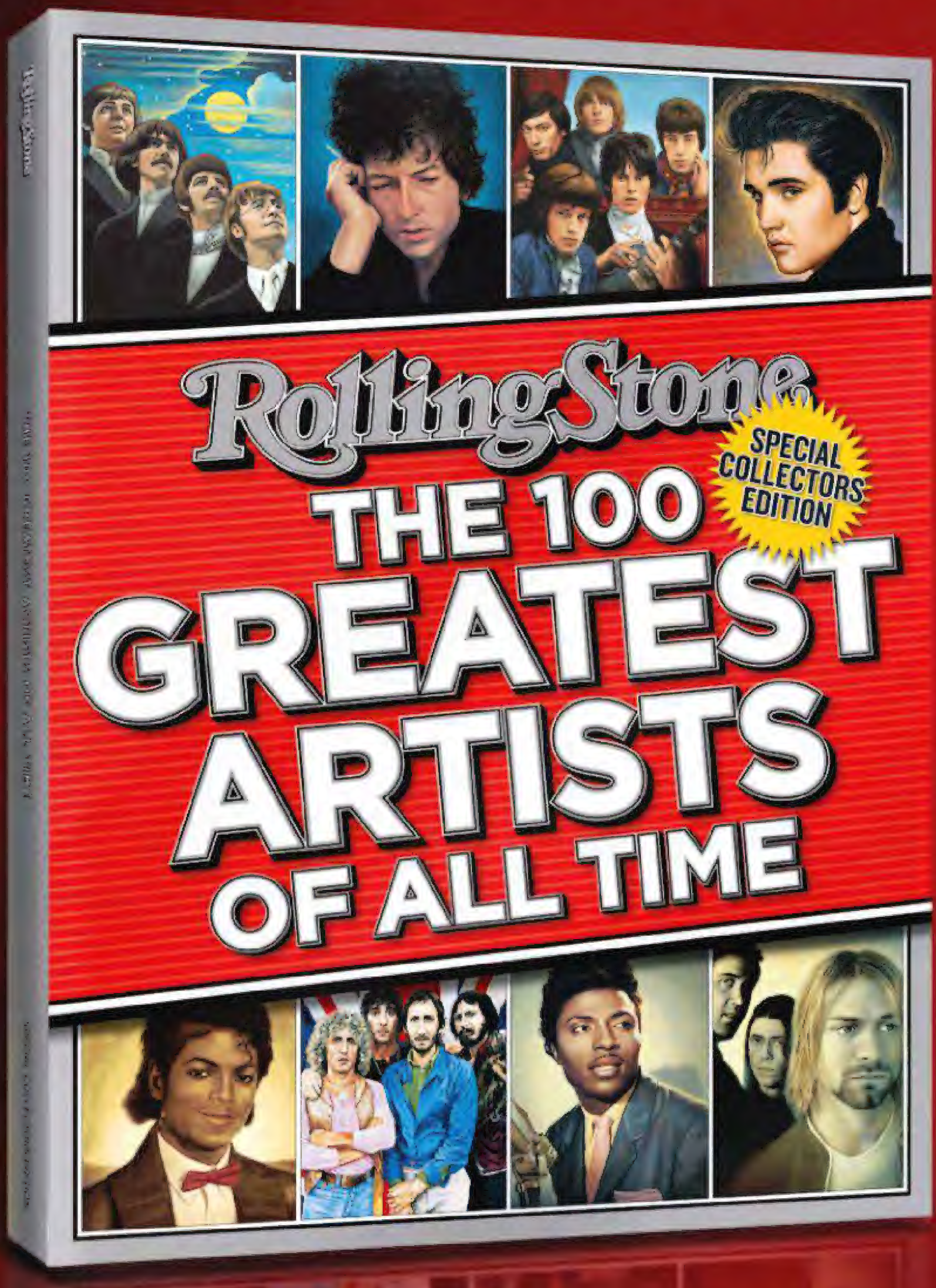

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BREAKING

Swedish House Mafia: Dance Music's Crossover Superstars

The three-man DJ crew party their way from Stockholm to Las Vegas

MAFIA HITS Axwell, Angello and Ingrosso (from left) in Miami

STEVE ANGELLO RECALLS his first trip to the promised land like it was yesterday. "I remember walking into Pacha, this legendary room, and feeling the magic," he says of the moment he set foot in one of Ibiza's premier clubs 10 years ago. "I've always been in love with Ibiza. The island lives and breathes dance music."

Alongside buddies Sebastian Ingrosso and Axwell, Angello is now one-third of dance music's hottest rising act, the DJ crew Swedish House Mafia. Their new single, "Save the World," racked up almost 10 million YouTube views in just two weeks in May, and later this month, they'll play their biggest show, for more than 100,000 fans in a headlining slot at the Electric Daisy Carnival festival in Las Vegas.

The guys got together a decade ago in their native Stockholm at a time when hip-hop ruled clubs. "It was rare in Scandinavia to produce dance music then," Ingrosso says. Axwell chimes in, "They thought it was a rave thing, people standing out in the forest eating acid and being all weird."

Swedish House Mafia's debut single, 2007's "Get Dumb," was stripped down and lean, but their sound has grown along with their success – "Save the World" features wind-swept vocals, Coldplay-esque piano riffs, endlessly ascending chords and a giant, life-affirming chorus. "We started playing tiny bars, and we ended up selling out arenas," Angello says of the group's bulked-up sonics. "It's like any business structure: You want to build."

While all three are new dads, they still party hard. "We're quite hung over now," Angello admits, listing last night's intake: "Five bottles of Jägermeister, three bottles of vodka, some Cristal, some beers."

From Katy Perry and the Black Eyed Peas to their fellow DJ David Guetta, pop radio is currently ruled by house beats – a crossover trend that Swedish House Mafia have been wary of in the past. Today, though, they're magnanimous. "It's like punk," says Angello. "It used to be these secret events – but when it crossed over, they could play Wembley." JONAH WEINER

CHART WATCH

Bassist Cubbie Fink, Foster and drummer Mark Pontius (from left)

Foster the People Hit Big With 'Pumped Up Kicks'

L.A. indie-pop trio Foster the People – led by commercial-jingle writer Mark Foster, 27 – have been together for less than two years, but they've already scored a Top 10 album. Thanks to the hypercatchy smash "Pumped Up Kicks" – which has sold 300,000 copies and scored more than 3 million YouTube views – their first LP, *Torches*, debuted at Number Eight last month. "I didn't even write it to be a hit," says Foster. "It's crazy."

PUMP YOU UP Sunny harmonies and a throbbing dance beat meet chilling lyrics about a school shooting on "Pumped Up Kicks." "I was trying to get inside the head of an isolated, psychotic kid," says Foster. "It's a 'fuck you' song to hipsters, in a way – but it's a song the hipsters are going to want to dance to."

MAD MAN Foster moved from Cleveland to L.A. when he was 18 to pursue music, but struggled with addiction. After kicking the habit, he landed a gig penning TV-ad jingles for Verizon and Honey Bunches of Oats. "I definitely learned from the commercial standpoint what works," he says.

WHAT'S NEXT A summer club tour and larger venues in the fall. Says Foster, "A tidal wave just came and we're swimming like hell." PATRICK DOYLE

Lelia Broussard

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Singer-songwriter Lelia Broussard faces off against the Sheepdogs

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The Sheepdogs

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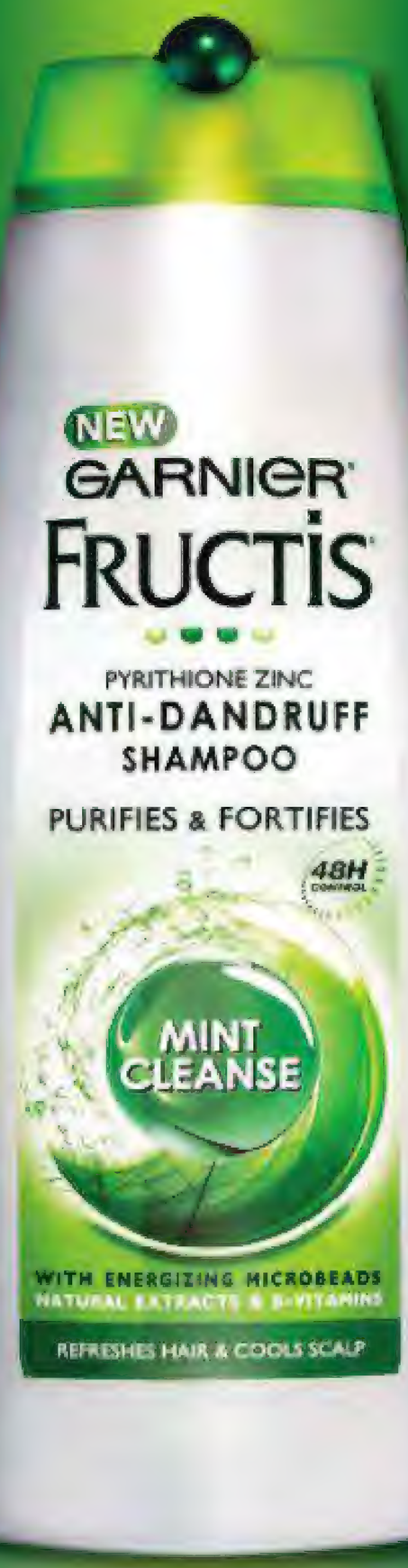

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Gil Scott-Heron

1949-2011

The revolutionary poet and musician helped inspire hip-hop, but he couldn't outrun his demons. By Jonah Weiner

GIL SCOTT-HERON WAS OFTEN CALLED THE GODfather of Rap – a title that acknowledges the poet and musician's meld of spoken verse and percolating percussion, most famously on 1970's scaldingly satirical "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised." But while Scott-Heron's influence is audible from the bomb-tossing rhymes of Public Enemy to the introspective social critiques of Kanye West (who has sampled him repeatedly), the artist, who died on May 27th at 62, was bigger than any genre. Giving blistering, eloquent voice to the pain, anxiety, humor and hope of post-civil-rights black America, Scott-Heron swung between proto-rap, jazz, soul and funk with aplomb. "He was electrifying," says Clive Davis, who signed Scott-Heron to Arista Records in 1975. "Was there a Dylan in him? A Miles? A Stevie? A Sly? Yes, he had all of that, and yet the guy was unique."

In the decades that preceded his death, Scott-Heron suffered a range of afflictions: scoliosis, arthritis, psoriasis, a foot infection and, most devastating, an addiction to crack cocaine, which landed him in prison twice. He seemed to retreat from the world, releasing just two albums since 1982. But his final years were more complicated than that unhappy picture suggests. He toured extensively, his rumbling baritone growing marvelously weathered, and he made 2010's *I'm New Here*, a comeback LP that stands with his best work. "He was like John Wayne," says Richard Russell, the producer who collaborated with Scott-Heron on his final album. "The first time I met him, he was at Rikers for possession. I said, 'You aren't complaining much.' He said, 'If you complain, no one wants to hang out with you.'"

WHO WILL SURVIVE IN AMERICA? Scott-Heron in 1976. Says Clive Davis, "Was there a Dylan in him? A Miles? A Stevie? He had all that."

Scott-Heron was born in Chicago in 1949. He moved with his mother, a one-time opera singer, to New York in the early Sixties (his father, a Jamaican professional soccer player, left the family when Scott-Heron was two), befriending a kid who would later take the name Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. "He was your basic gym-rat basketball maniac," Abdul-Jabbar recalls. "He ended up marrying a girl I went to UCLA with, Brenda Sykes, and I was best man at their wedding." Impressed by his writing, a teacher recommended Scott-Heron for a scholarship at the elite Ethical Culture Fieldston School in the Bronx, where he enrolled as one of five black students. Recalling a Fieldston admissions interview, Scott-Heron once said, "They asked, 'How would you feel if you see one of your classmates go by in a limousine while you're walking up the hill from the subway?' And I said, 'Same way as you. Y'all can't afford no limousine. How do you feel?'"

That blunt perceptiveness made Scott-Heron's best music crackle, starting with 1970's *Small Talk at 125th and Lenox*, which he recorded when he was 21, having established himself as a rising poet. The mostly spoken-word debut features "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised," which presents a barrage of tweaked advertising slogans: "The revolution will not go better with Coke," "The revolution will not fight the germs that may cause bad breath." What stands out 41 years later is its sly, slippery humor. "He was serious and he was hilarious at the same time, calling Gerald Ford 'oatmeal man,' calling Reagan a 'B actor,'" says jazz great Roy Ayers, who shared bills with Scott-Heron in the Seventies and Eighties. "I was in awe of his intelligence." In songs like "Whitey on the Moon," in which Scott-Heron torpedoes the triumphal spirit around the lunar landing with brutal details of inner-city life on planet Earth, he blurred the line between activism and stand-up, taking deadly aim at tragic absurdities with a scowl – and a wink.

On 1971's *Pieces of a Man*, Scott-Heron partnered with the musician Brian Jackson and morphed into a street-wise soulman. He released 11 more albums in the next 11 years, a run that produced the hard-grooving alcoholic's lament "The Bottle" and the nuclear-protest funk of "Shut 'Um Down." Says Public Enemy's Chuck D, "From his voice and cadence to his wit and punch lines, the first hip-hop artists were able to take their style and attitude from Gil Scott-Heron."

In the 1980s, Scott-Heron developed his cocaine habit. "When his daughter Gia graduated from junior high, I went, because he wasn't around," Abdul-Jabbar says. "By the mid-Eighties, I was hearing that he'd fallen off the deep end." Despite his demons, Scott-Heron still performed acts of remarkable kindness and high-spiritedness. In 1984, a homeless fan named Mark Watson, now Malik Al Nasir, snuck backstage at a Liverpool concert. Scott-Heron eventually offered him a job as roadie, tour manager and assistant – an informal position that lasted through Scott-Heron's 2010 gigs. "He was a guy at the top of his game, in this random city, and he decided to pick up this homeless black kid with no prospects and mentor him," Al Nasir says. "That's the kind of man he was." Up to his death, Scott-Heron would sing to himself on the uptown 2 train through Harlem, entertaining passengers with impromptu concerts. "He marched to his own drummer," says Chuck D. "He had a dedication to music that was true."

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Ukuleles Rock: Little Axes Earn Big Fans

Why acts from Eddie Vedder to Taylor Swift are strumming ukes in 2011

ON HER CURRENT TOUR, Taylor Swift has six aerialists, more costume changes than ever – and a ukulele. Looking for new ways to perform songs she's played "over 4 million times," Swift pulled out a ukulele she'd bought on a Hawaiian vacation a few years ago. "I thought 'Fearless' could be pretty on the ukulele," says Swift. "The ukulele can bring so many different dimensions to a song –

"It's a powerful little instrument," says Vedder. "I've got so much respect for it."

it can make it sound childlike or hopeful or happy. For such a tiny instrument, it can fill an arena with sound."

Long relegated to novelty status, ukuleles are suddenly everywhere. Train dragged the instrument into the Top 10 on "Hey, Soul Sister"; ukes have been spotted in the hands of everyone from Will.i.am to *Glee*'s Matthew Morrison; and Eddie Vedder has just released *Ukulele Songs*, an entire album cut on the tiny four-string. "It's a powerful little instrument," says Vedder, who got his first uke from a neighbor when he was eight but didn't learn to play it till years later. "You're allowed to focus on the melody. I've just got so much respect for what other people consider, you know, a toy."

Music chain Guitar Center sold tens of thousands of ukuleles last year – a 300 percent increase since 2008. In April, C.F. Martin introduced six new models, starting at $1,500. Since ukulele chords are different from guitar chords, sheet-music publishers have begun cranking out uke songbooks on bands from the Beatles to Black Sabbath. There's even uke sheet music for *Glee*. "Talk about combining two hot topics," says Jeff Schroedl, vice president of sheet-music company Hal Leonard.

Born in Portugal and popularized in Hawaii, the ukulele had its first heyday during the Twenties. In 1968, it made a comeback with Tiny Tim's "Tip-Toe Thru' the Tulips With Me," and the Who and Moby Grape later featured it on album tracks. Rock's most fervent uke enthusiast was George Harrison, who collected dozens of the instruments and even attended uke conventions. "Sometimes in the house there would be 10 people playing ukuleles at the same time," recalls his son, Dhani Harrison. "Eventually, it gets to you and you can't help but love it. It's very disarming." Dhani, who inherited about 40 of his father's ukuleles, is using them on several tracks on the new album he's finishing with his band, thenewno2.

The uke's current vogue dates back to Hawaiian singer Israel Kamakawiwo'ole's 1993 "Somewhere Over the Rainbow/What a Wonderful World," which became ubiquitous in movie soundtracks and TV commercials. In 2006, another Hawaiian, Jake Shimabukuro, had a viral smash with his virtuosic cover of Harrison's "While My Guitar Gently Weeps," which has racked up over 8 million YouTube views. "On my earlier albums, there's a lot of distorted ukulele, and people asked me, 'Who was the electric-guitar player on that album?'" says Shimabukuro. "I was like, 'There's no electric-guitar player; it's a ukulele.'" Says Vedder, "Jake is taking the instrument to a place that I can't see anybody else catching up with him."

Despite its newfound popularity, the instrument still poses a few challenges for rockers. "It's hard to look cool onstage playing a ukulele," admits Train guitarist Jimmy Stafford. "At first when I saw pictures of myself playing it, I thought, 'I gotta work on my ukulele moves.' You have to stand tall and play it like Jimmy Page would. I have it down to where I don't look like too much of a dork."

DAVID BROWNE

Put Up Your Ukes

Vedder in Hawaii (1), where he lives part of the year. (2) Ukulele virtuoso Shimabukuro. (3) Swift has started playing the instrument at her shows.

Four-String Fury A guide to the ukulele's greatest, weirdest and biggest rock hits

"Tip-Toe Thru' the Tulips With Me"
Tiny Tim, 1968
The stringy-haired, castrato-voiced folkie's fluke uke hit – a cover of a Depression-era tune – was sweet and creepy at the same time.

"Blue Red and Grey"
The Who, 1975
On rock's greatest and most poignant ukulele song, Pete Townshend croons about loving "every minute of the day" to his own supple strums.

"While My Guitar Gently Weeps"
Jake Shimabukuro, 2004
The uke hero's YouTube smash starts delicately, but by the end, Shimabukuro is flailing on his four-string like a Hawaiian Eddie Van Halen.

"Hey, Soul Sister"
Train, 2010
The band's comeback smash was originally written for guitar. It was changed to uke in the studio, and ended up helping to set off thousands of uke sales.

"Sleeping by Myself"
Eddie Vedder, 2011
A man, a uke and his lonely thoughts: This shimmering gem is a highlight from Vedder's *Ukulele Songs*, inspired by Townshend's "Blue Red and Grey."

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: DANNY CLINCH; 2: COURTESY OF 13 MANAGEMENT

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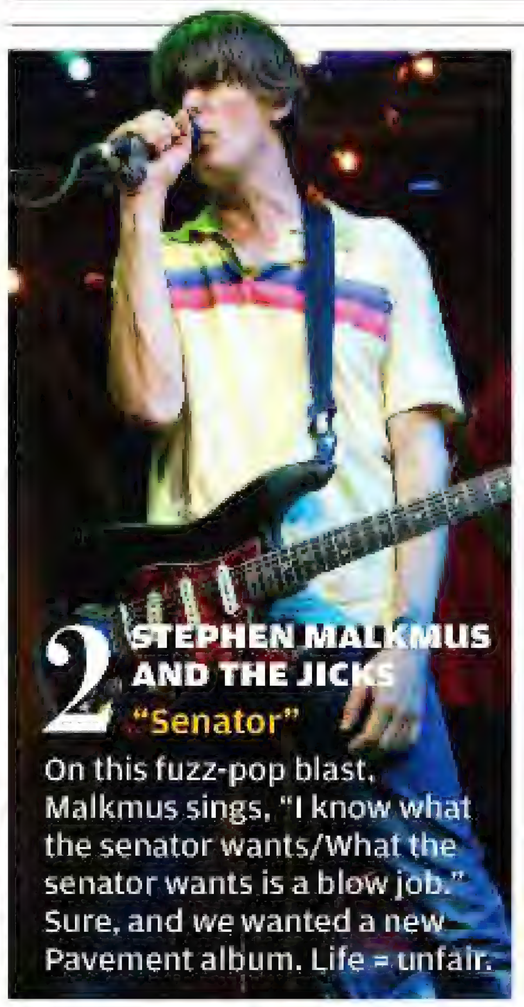
HOT LIST

1 MY MORNING JACKET
Unstaged

Need more evidence that My Morning Jacket totally rule live? Just hit YouTube for highlights from their recent webcast – including monster takes on tunes from the new *Circuital* and a jaw-dropping run through the Jacket-head live fave "Wordless Chorus" with buddy Erykah Badu.



2 STEPHEN MALKMUS AND THE JICKS
"Senator"

On this fuzz-pop blast, Malkmus sings, "I know what the senator wants/What the senator wants is a blow job." Sure, and we wanted a new Pavement album. Life = unfair.

3 COLDPLAY "Every Teardrop Is a Waterfall"

Hail Britannia! Coldplay are back with a heartstrings-yanking anthem (surprise!) that sounds like Underworld's "Born Slippy" making a baby with Peter Gabriel's "Solsbury Hill" in Joshua Tree National Park. There's no point in even thinking about denying it – welcome to the sound of the rest of 2011.

4 VETIVER
The Errant Charm

NorCal folk freak Andy Cabic and crew have always had a super-cool Bert Jansch-on-space-cakes vibe, but with their fifth LP they finally have the killer tunes to match.

5 KREAYSHAWN
"Gucci Gucci" video

If you thought hip-hop had reached maximum cartoonish weirdness with Odd Future, meet lady MC Kreayshawn, whose Hanna-Barbera levels (and boasts so awesomely dumb they make Soulja Boy seem like a spelling-bee champion) are off the charts.

IN THE NEWS

Deluxe live Hendrix reissues on the way

On September 13th, a pair of Jimi Hendrix live albums will be reissued in deluxe editions. *Hendrix in the West*, compiled from 1969 and 1970 gigs, will arrive with five unreleased tunes. *Winterland* – documenting the Jimi Hendrix Experience's legendary three-night, six-gig stand at San Francisco's Winterland Ballroom in October 1968 – will be expanded to a four-CD set. "At Winterland, Jimi had to do two sets per night and kept up an intensity that didn't quit," says Hendrix engineer Eddie Kramer. "As a band, the Experience was on fire."

Hendrix

Robbie Robertson joins Order of Canada

The Band guitarist received the Order of Canada, the Canadian government's highest civilian honor, at a May 27th ceremony in Ottawa. Officials cited Robertson's work with Native American genres on his solo albums for the honor: "Through a fertile blending of diverse musical styles, he has introduced Native music to a much wider audience."

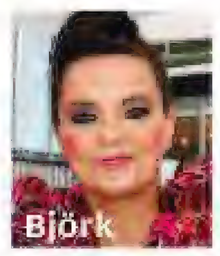
Robertson

Paul Simon, Santana fight Grammy changes

Simon and Carlos Santana are speaking out against the Recording Academy's recent decision to eliminate 31 Grammy Award categories, including traditional blues, zydeco and Latin jazz. In a letter to Academy president Neil Portnow, Simon wrote, "The Grammys have done a disservice to many talented musicians by combining previously distinct and separate types of music into a catchall of blurry larger categories."

Björk preps new album, with apps for each song

Biophilia, the singer's first LP since 2007, will arrive later this year as a suite of 10 interactive iPad apps – one for each song – as well as a traditional album. Björk will premiere the tunes at a series of live performances kicking off at the U.K.'s Manchester International Festival on June 30th.


Björk

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Adam Levine

The 'Voice' star – and Maroon 5 singer – on bickering with Xtina, rocking like Queen and the best sushi on Earth

By Austin Scaggs

NBC'S HIT SINGING SHOW, "THE VOICE," IS built around the oversize personalities of its superstar mentor judges: Christina Aguilera, Cee Lo Green, country hitmaker Blake Shelton and Maroon 5 frontman Adam Levine. But it's Levine, thanks to a combination of sensible advice, sarcastic comments and contentious bickering with Aguilera, who has surprised viewers by becoming the show's breakout star. "At first I was like, 'Oh, shit, here we go, what if this sucks?'" he says. "But now I'm very passionate about the show." And he hasn't quit his day job, either. In June, Maroon 5 will embark on a 45-night romp around the U.S. "It's going to be a blast," says Levine, 32, sipping an Asahi before a gig in South Korea. "We can't wait to go apeshit."

What's it like touring Asia, playing markets that most musicians don't hit?

Well, we don't call them markets, because bands aren't supposed to know what markets are. Just kidding. It's funny, we don't realize how big we are until we come to Japan or Korea or Indonesia. Clearly we're not from the neighborhood, and the fans here have a different appreciation, knowing that we've traveled thousands of miles to play for them.

What made you want to do *The Voice*?

I'm not a fan of reality TV. But I liked the fact that you're picking people based on raw talent, and hopefully launching their careers. You don't have to be a nonprofessional to be on the show [unlike *American Idol*]. So these are people getting a second or third shot in a business where you need that.

What's up with the tension between you and Christina? Did you hook up a long time ago or something?

I just met her a couple of days before we started shooting! I don't know where it comes from. We just bicker like brother and sister, and part of it is fabricated by the television gods. But she's great. I respect the shit out of her. She's going through a tough time, and God bless her. This show is great for her. But if she busts my balls, I'll bust hers.

Which of your Maroon 5 bandmates was most upset about you doing the TV show?

[*Laughs*] They don't care, man. They're cool.

No way!

This is nothing but good for everybody. It's a win-win. We're not an indie rock band; it's not like it's going to hurt our credibility. If anything, it brings more visibility to the band. And the band is a healthy band, we all have good relationships with each other. It's rare, but it's true.

You're a foodie. What's your favorite restaurant in America?

Sushi Nozawa, in Los Angeles, is the greatest place on Earth.

I heard that chef Nozawa is retiring soon.

Really? Maybe he'll be like Jay-Z and say he's retired but just hang around forever [*laughs*].

What albums are you currently obsessed with?

Mumford & Sons, along with the rest of the country. I haven't felt like a real music fan in a long time, but that record has made me a fan again. There's something so gripping about the way the lyrics are delivered – it's angsty and mad, but it's beautiful soul music. There's a song called "Timshel" that breaks my heart. Them selling records and Arcade Fire winning the Grammy restores my faith in music.

What can fans expect on the Maroon 5 tour?

We're adding big Marshall stacks, adding speakers and subwoofers. We have an old-school mentality toward entertaining. We emulate bands like the Stones, U2, Van Halen and Queen, bands that put on such a motherfucker of a show that you can't not like it. We want people to get lost in the experience. There's no smoke and mirrors.

You said that the group might have only one record left before you all embark on something new. True?

I don't know. Actually, that's just bullshit. I want to evolve with this band. And I want to say to non-Maroon 5 fans out there, and those that hate us: Please come see us this summer, and if you don't enjoy yourself, I will personally reimburse you.

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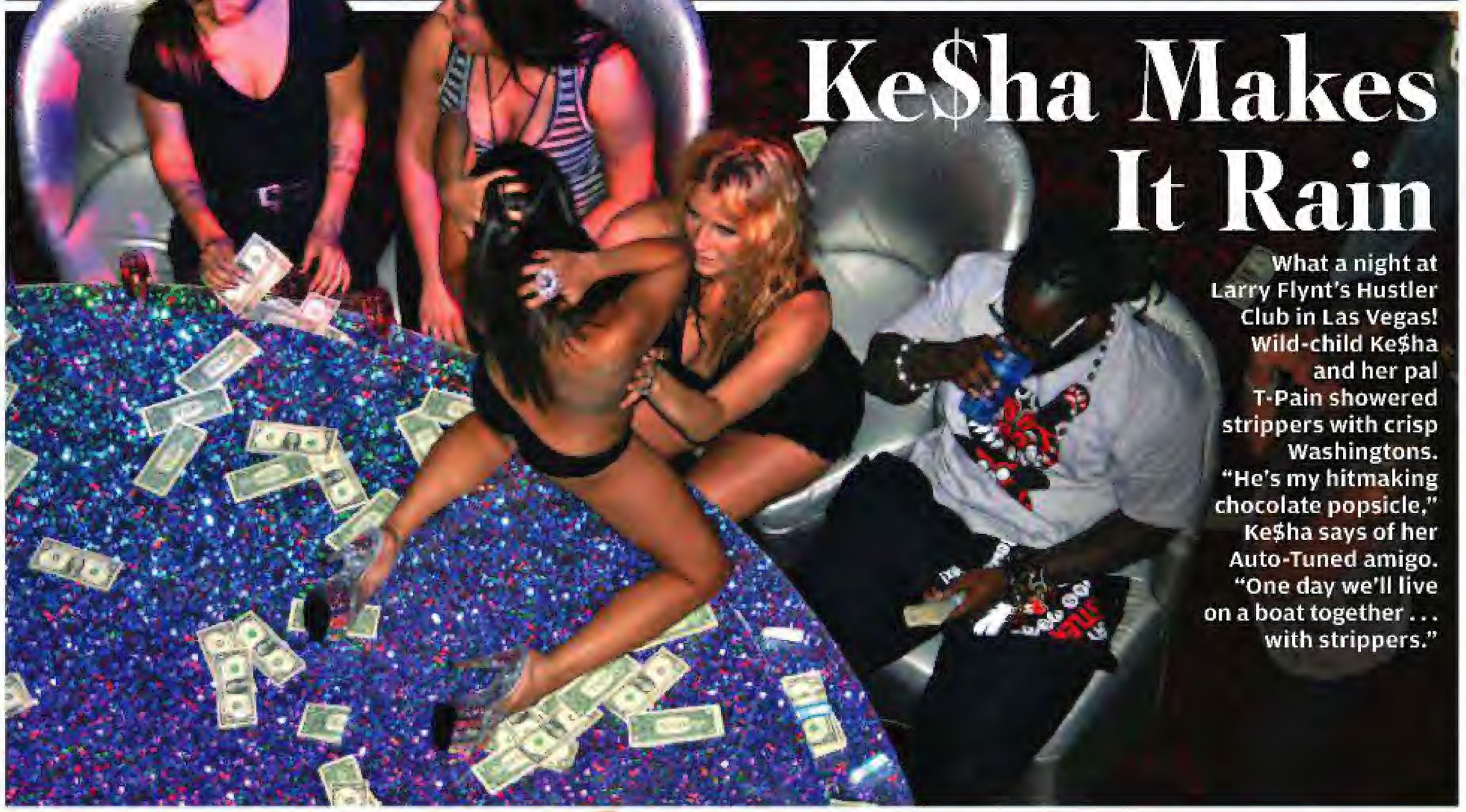
"It's the guy who played Chewbacca's birthday today, so we made a cake." —Taylor Swift on Twitter

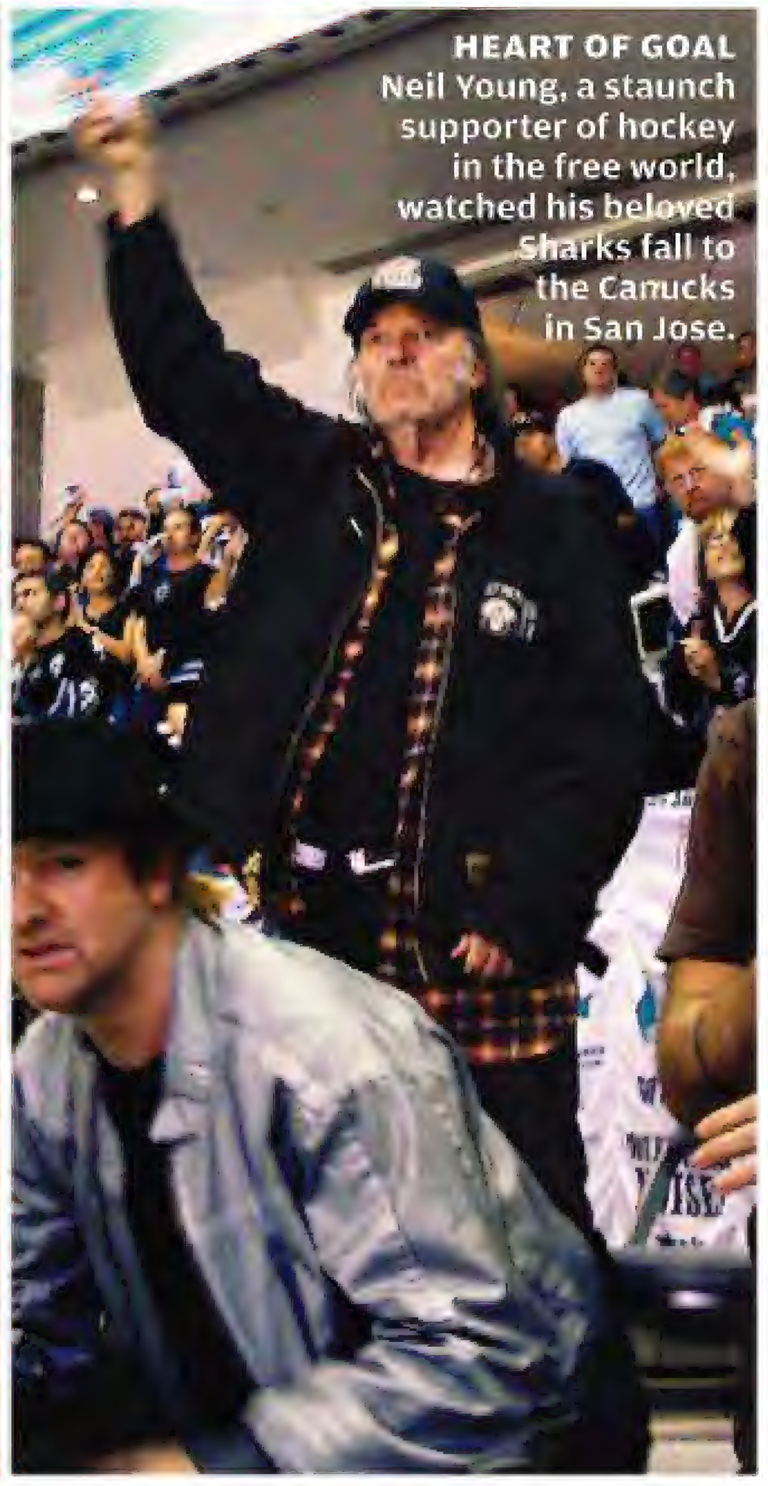
Random Notes



Ke$ha Makes It Rain

What a night at Larry Flynt's Hustler Club in Las Vegas! Wild-child Ke$ha and her pal T-Pain showered strippers with crisp Washingtons. "He's my hitmaking chocolate popsicle," Ke$ha says of her Auto-Tuned amigo. "One day we'll live on a boat together . . . with strippers."

MANE ATTRACTION Mesmerized fans debated who was closer to the glorious Earth goddess Gaia – Jim James or Erykah Badu – at an MMJ show in Louisville.



HEART OF GOAL Neil Young, a staunch supporter of hockey in the free world, watched his beloved Sharks fall to the Canucks in San Jose.

30 Rock of Ages

No, Weird Al and Daryl Hall haven't joined forces. That's Russell Brand and Alec Baldwin chilling in Miami during a break from shooting the film adaptation of the hit musical *Rock of Ages*, in which they'll play aging Eighties rock stars.

Brand and Baldwin: the new Lollipop Guild

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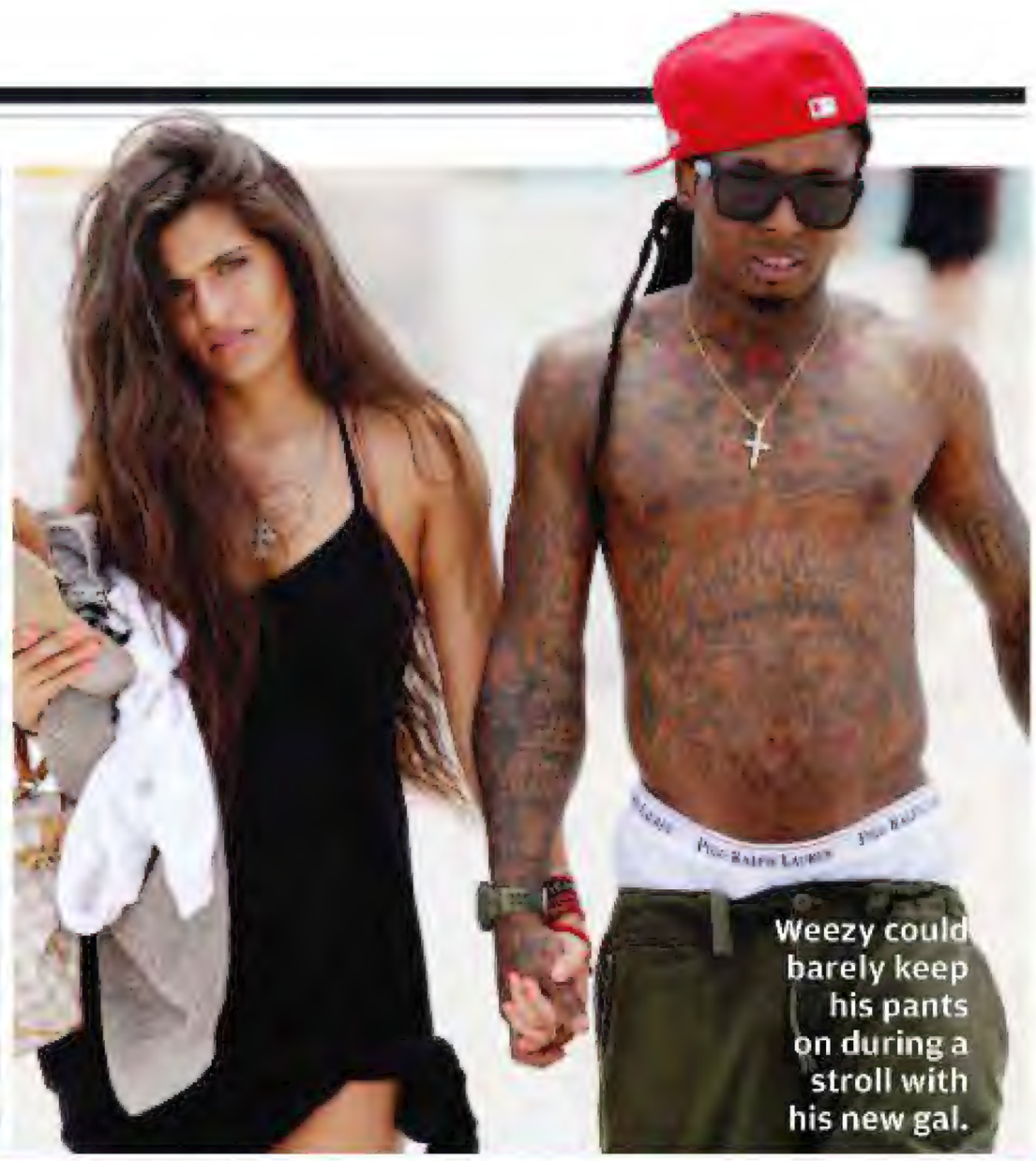
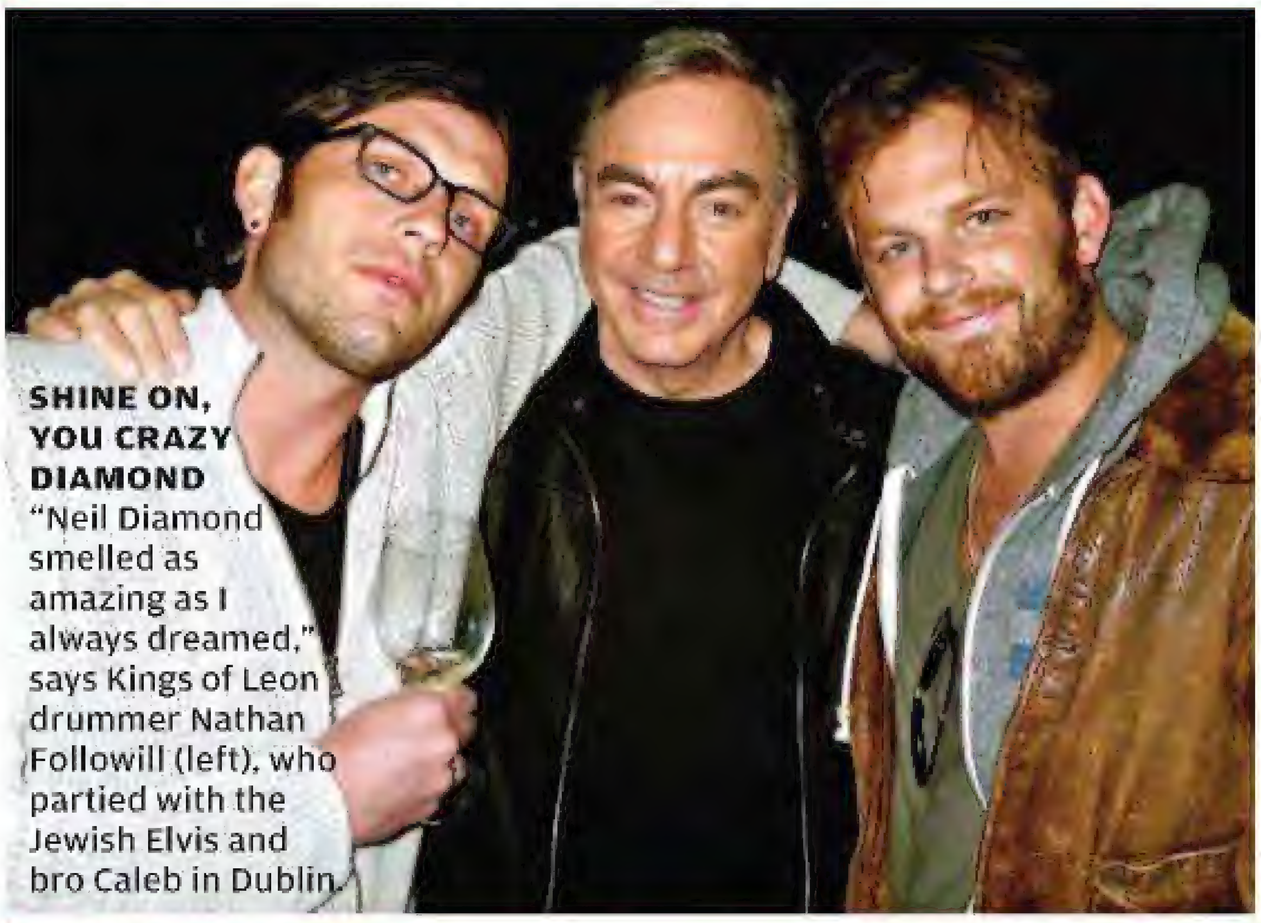
Summer Lovin'

What do Justin Bieber and Lil Wayne have in common? Well, neither one is allowed on the big-person rides at Six Flags, and they're both head over heels in love! Weezy took his latest squeeze – reportedly a waitress from Scottsdale, Arizona – to Miami Beach and tweeted un-gangsta shit like, "Never knew falling kud feel so good." (Maybe he's just hyping his gooey new single, "How to Love"?) Meanwhile, in Maui, Biebs had his hands full with Disney's own Selena Gomez.

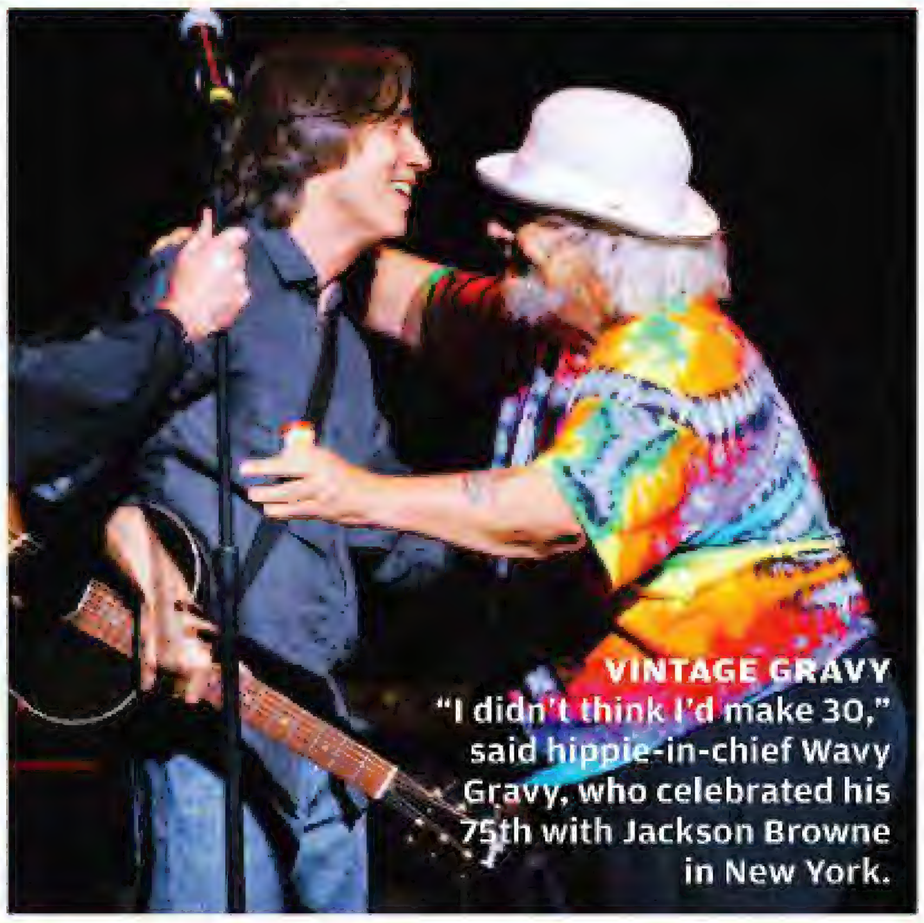
In Hawaii, Bieber and Gomez proved it takes two to hula.



Weezy could barely keep his pants on during a stroll with his new gal.



SHINE ON, YOU CRAZY DIAMOND
"Neil Diamond smelled as amazing as I always dreamed," says Kings of Leon drummer Nathan Followill (left), who partied with the Jewish Elvis and bro Caleb in Dublin.



VINTAGE GRAVY
"I didn't think I'd make 30," said hippie-in-chief Wavy Gravy, who celebrated his 75th with Jackson Browne in New York.

Lil' Zachary watched as one of his dads elbowed the other into the Grand Canal.

Crazy-haired Coyne made a terrifying baby sitter.

Baby Love

Summer's hottest rock-star accessory? Adorable babies! Elton John brought his tiny dancer Zachary to see the canals of Venice. (He was named after San Zaccaria, his dads' favorite church there.) A world away at Washington state's scenic Gorge Amphitheatre, Wayne Coyne killed time backstage before the Flaming Lips' Sasquatch! festival set by frightening an innocent child – and that was before he took her for a harrowing ride in his plastic bubble.

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SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE Anna Gunn and Cranston in *Breaking Bad*.

The Downward Spiral

Inside 'Breaking Bad,' TV's most exquisitely agonizing drama

By Andrew Leonard

A FAMILIAR SENSE OF ANXIety and dread hangs over nearly every moment of the opening episode of the fourth season of *Breaking Bad*. Walter White, the one-time high school chemistry teacher turned crystal-meth cook, frantically tries to talk his way out of his own impending execution. His partner, Jesse Pinkman, is still in a state of shock, having just committed an unpardonable act of violence against a rival meth chef. Walter's disappearance has his crooked lawyer panicking and his wife driven to distraction. For the climax, we get yet another startling, brutal murder, choreographed with deadly precision like a psychopathic, blood-drenched ballet.

If the first three seasons of *Breaking Bad* firmly established the show as one of the grimmest sagas of our time, an ambitious bid to explore an American dream gone horribly wrong, then the opening salvo of Season Four is a wrenching promise to plunge even deeper into the morass. But the puzzling marvel of *Breaking Bad* is that it is at once both so bleak and yet so watchable. "I'm as surprised as anyone that this show resonates at all," says creator Vince Gilligan, who earned his producing stripes working on *The X-Files*. "I scratch my head sometimes. How does it even exist?"

Breaking Bad Sundays, 10 p.m., AMC

Bryan Cranston's Emmy Award-winning performance as Walter offers one big clue. Most of us would rather not deal with the sight of a man dying of cancer, or would avert our eyes from a crumbling marriage. But when Cranston is on-screen, you cannot look away, no matter how dire his predicament. If *Breaking Bad* is at heart, as Gilligan suggests, the story of a man having "the world's worst midlife crisis," then Cranston's uncanny ability to switch from slump-shouldered milquetoast to cold and calculating killer is what makes that crisis riveting. "The show would not succeed at all if it weren't for Bryan," says Gilligan.

The defining contradiction of Walter White's life is that the longer he survives in the drug underworld, the more he seems to revel in the unconscionable things he must to do to stay alive. And yet, at the same time, some shreds of decency linger inside him. The new season declares that Walter's descent, his grim voyage from

BEN LEUNER/AMC

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America's Top Chef

Bryan Cranston on the joy of cooking meth, Obamacare and 'Malcolm in the Middle'

Mister Rogers to Michael Corleone, will continue unabated, but a reckoning to that contradiction is inevitable.

This overriding theme was set in the very first episode, when Walter explains to a classroom of teenagers that chemistry is all about "growth, decay. Transformation." The same definition applies to cancer, as well as to Walter's metamorphosis from chronic underachiever to amoral drug kingpin. Gilligan says he believes the narrative flows naturally from his

BAD MEDICINE
Pinkman (Aaron Paul) cooks some meth.

'Breaking Bad' is the story of a man having "the world's worst midlife crisis," says its creator.

determination to be as honest as possible about the consequences of Walter's decision to transform himself into a criminal. By Season Four, the things Walter must do to survive would have been incomprehensible to him a year earlier (all four seasons take place in one calendar year), but as he tells himself, he had no choice. The chain reaction must play itself out. Chemistry and cancer have no morals, no ethics, and Walter resolves his midlife crisis by emulating them.

There are elements of *The Godfather* and *The Sopranos* in *Breaking Bad* ("If you're going to steal, steal from the best," says Gilligan), but we've never seen anything quite like this mixture of the mundane and monstrous before. And that's on purpose. Gilligan says he's watched more TV than "any human has a right to," and he is determined to not waste viewers' time by repeating what's already been done. Gilligan insists on pushing his viewers into unexplored territory, to show them "things they've never seen before." He takes the familiar and twists it into nightmare. Every second of the fourth-season premiere screams that Walter White will continue down this terrible path, but we've got to find out what happens, and how it's all going to end, even if, as Cranston almost gleefully promises, "we know it can't be good."

Where does the darkness in "Breaking Bad" come from? Is it an indictment of America? A reflection?

You can look for deeper meanings, but it could be just an examination of one's man life, and his degradation, the downward spiral that he is on.

Do you think the show's success can be attributed to the fact that it resonates with a dark time in U.S. history?

The timing of it was imperative. If the show had been pitched even a year before, or two years, I don't think it would have been right. It would be like a wine that was too young, not ready: "I don't want to drink that. Take it back."

You could argue that "Breaking Bad" is about the lack of decent health care.

My personal feeling is that health care should be a right of all human beings, especially in the richest country in the world. But if we did have universal health care five years ago, the show might not have worked. Thank God Obamacare wasn't in play then. Whew!

Walter is beginning to seem more fulfilled as a gangster than as a family man.

The thing I don't think he or the audience could have anticipated was how this adrenaline pumping in his veins changed him. As a man, Walter White never, in his 50 years, came close to intimidating another human being, and all of a sudden he is doing it on a daily basis. That's power, that's being alive. Now there's no being depressed or bored. Fuck, no, he's pumped. We are being honest in showing the effects on his ego, of his avaricious behavior, his hubris, it's just bubbling out of him, and he's owning it.

Your depiction of a man dying of cancer is extremely powerful. Did you draw on any personal experience for that?

It goes back to my grandfather. The very first death of someone I loved. I lived with him for a year when my parents broke up. He died when I was 14 – and it crushed me. And he, ironically, died of lung cancer. He never smoked in his life, but he was a baker, and they surmised that the dust, inhaling the flour dust from all the years, created it. And my sister-in-law has breast cancer, and we're dealing with that now. At my age, I don't think anyone is untouched by cancer.

How do you rate your own legacy? You were the bumbling father in "Malcolm in the Middle," and now you're a meth chef. That's quite the contrast.

When I was on *Malcolm*, I would have been proud to have the opening statement on my obit read, "The father of *Malcolm in the Middle* passed away today at 110." But Walter is the role of my life. If I'm to be remembered, it will be for this. And if anything comes after, it'll be like: Would you like more gravy on your gravy on top of your meat? Oh, my God. It would be ridiculous. A.L.

DREAM JOB
"Walter is the role of my life," says Cranston.

URSULA COYOTE/AMC. 2

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When Monsters Attack

Check local listings for alien invasions, lusty vampires, teen werewolves, bearded freaks, time travelers, talking dogs and Ice-T's wife **By Rob Sheffield**

Wilfred

Thursdays, 10 p.m., FX

It's hard to describe *Wilfred* without sounding like you just gobbled an angel-dust fajita, but here goes: Elijah Wood makes friends with a talking dog owned by the girl next door. Nobody else can hear the dog talk except Wood. And he's played by a guy in a dog suit. When we first meet Wood, he's a depressed ex-lawyer at the end of his rope, sweating over drafts of his suicide note. But then he meets Wilfred, who seems like a normal dog to the rest of the world but appears to Wood as a mortmouth hedonist with a human face who babbles like a canine Russell Brand. Wilfred gets him stoned and bonds with him over their mutual love of *Dune*, and before long, Wilfred's goading him into robbing a neighbor's house so they can crash his drug stash, proclaiming, "We're gonna need a bigger bong!" It's a remake of a hit Australian comedy, with Jason Gann reprising his role as the dog. There's some kind of *Sigmund and the Sea Monsters*-meets-*Donnie Darko* thing going on, with the whole imaginary-friend Mr. Snuffleupagus motif. It's a daring move for Wood, not to mention FX, but here's the weirdest part of it all: This is the funniest and trippiest of summer's new comedies even if you can smell the pot-soaked carpet in the writers' room.

Gann as Wilfred, the stoner dog

Falling Skies

Sundays, 9 p.m., TNT

This lofty alien-invasion story from executive producer Steven Spielberg goes heavy on the special effects. But none of the movie magic can top Noah Wyle's beard. It makes him look like a preppy Chuck Norris. In other words, just the action hero to lead the human rebellion against the space invaders. The basic idea is *War of the Worlds*, but it's more like *Battlestar Galactica* with a side order of *Red Dawn*.

The "skitters," as the humans call the aliens, are nasty long-legged killing machines – a mix of *Aliens* and the bugs from *Starship Troopers*. As the story opens, they've got Earth under their control, turning human teens into packs of harness-wearing hypnotized zombies. Wyle is the mild-mannered history professor from Boston who helps fight them off, giving his fellow human soldiers inspirational pep talks about how they're like the Athenians fighting Sparta, or the Red Sox in the 2004 ALCS. "We don't have to kill them all," he says. "We just gotta kill enough of them. If we can make it too costly, too painful for them to stay, then they'll leave. They're wolves, we gotta be porcupines!" (Better porcupines than wolverines.)

Wyle takes on space invaders.

The whole project has a Spielberg feel, with sensitive depictions of post-apocalyptic grief, and a hot doctor played by former Laker girl Moon Bloodgood. Not all the subplots work, and the bad-guy characters are eye-rollingly smarmy. But Wyle is likable enough to make you root for the human race anyway.

Louie **Thursdays, 10:30 p.m., FX**

What's going on in the next chapter of Louis C.K.'s life? Will he show off his radiant personality, like a little bald-headed sunbeam? Or will he just keep on being the misanthropic creep who shocked America into laughing at his problems last time?

FROM LEFT: MICHAEL BECKER/FX; KEN WOROPNER/TNT

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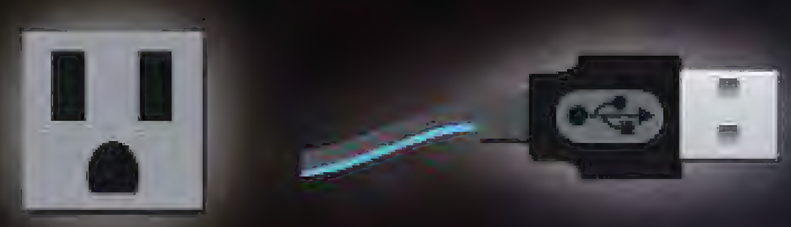

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The second season of *Louie* is more of a one-man-band show than ever – not only does he star, write and direct, he now edits the whole thing solo. That's right – he's gotten *less* sociable. Louie was always considered a comedian's comedian, too inside-baseball for mass appeal, but as a sitcom dad, he clearly struck a nerve with people. Nobody since Richard Pryor has made the life of a full-time comic look so depressing – it's a sordid business making people laugh, and it turns funny guys into monsters like this.

Whisker Wars

Fridays, 11 p.m., IFC

At last: an in-depth look at the world of competitive bearding. The hairy gents of Beard Team USA are training for the world championships in Norway, where top beardsmen clash in categories like Imperial Moustache and Full Beard Freestyle. Their big star: Jack Passion, the defending champ, who was the first American to win Full Beard Natural. As he says, "That name is 'Jack Passion, World Beard Champion.' It's not 'Jack Passion, Awesome Guy With a Beard.'" He's also written *The Facial Hair Handbook*, which he calls "the cornerstone of my beard empire."

Whisker Wars is so funny you keep thinking it has to be some lost Will Ferrell movie, but it's a documentary series from the same producer who gave us *Ice Road Truckers*. These are some sublimely twisted characters – where else can you hear someone brag that he's the "Muham-

FOLLICULAR CHALLENGE The mighty men of Whisker Wars

mad Ali of beards"? If you don't choke up when you hear the legendary Willi Chevalier recount how he lost three-quarters of his whiskers in a "tragic power-drill accident," you have no heart. Or maybe you just have no follicles.

Torchwood

Fridays, 10 p.m., Starz

The long-running *Doctor Who* spinoff comes to America, bringing a crack team of time-traveling agents to Los Angeles. Their mission: Find out why the entire human race has stopped dying. And since this is *Torchwood: Miracle Day*, it probably

OUT OF THE PAST Season Four reveals more of Vampire Bill's (Moyer) history.

The Season of the Witch

'True Blood' delves into dark magic and past lives

POOR SOOKIE STACKHOUSE. When we last saw Louisiana's sexiest telepathic waitress, she was devastated to learn that her lover, Vampire Bill, had been ordered to seduce Sookie (Anna Paquin). It didn't matter that Bill (Paquin's husband, Stephen Moyer) had fallen in love with her – the betrayal was real. And so Sookie is poised to fall into the arms of Vampire Eric, played by Alexander Skarsgård.

True Blood Sundays, 9 p.m., HBO

If a love triangle between vampires and a small-town waitress sounds over-the-top, then you probably weren't one of the 11.8 million viewers who watched the *True Blood* Season Three finale. "It's easy to wonder, 'Oh, who is Sookie gonna pick?'" says Alan Ball, the show's creator. "I know it's female wish fulfillment, but it's also like, 'Well, who gets the prize?' All the vampires are going, 'She's mine, she's mine,' but why should she be anybody's? Why shouldn't they be hers? Why do men always get to make all the rules?"

Whatever Sookie's choice proves to be, she will also certainly be contending with a coven of witches who arrive to wreak havoc in town. "The big thing this year is witchcraft," says Ball, "and looking at how, in our world, certain humans are able to access magic."

"We've got witches, Wiccans and warlords, all things that begin with 'w' and are quite a dark influence," says Moyer.

Season Four also promises to have lots more glimpses into the distant pasts of the immortal characters. "There's some great historical flashbacks this season," says Moyer, whose character is 173 years old and fought in the Civil War. "We go way back in history in order to move the story along. There's a quite surprising flashback that takes Bill back to a place where I really wasn't expecting him to have been."

Ball is sanguine about how many seasons of the schlocky, sexually charged soap opera he has left in him. "I am negotiating for a season past this one," he says. "But I don't believe *True Blood* is 100 percent dependent on my participation. It has a very strong following and a really strong cast, and there could be a future where I step back and the show would continue."

"It's easy to wonder who Sookie is gonna pick," says Alan Ball. "It's female wish fulfillment."

In the meantime, though, Sookie, Eric and Bill undoubtedly have a lot more sucking, *schtupping* and killing to do. "That's part of the appeal," says Ball. "In a very safe environment, you can vicariously feel the power that one might feel if one were to solve one's problems in such a brutal way." DOREE SHAFRIR

FROM LEFT: KAROLINA WOJTASIK/IFC; JOHN P. JOHNSON/HBO

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involves sinister aliens. Like the first three seasons on the BBC, the American-themed quasi-reboot stars John Barrowman as the dashing Captain Jack Harkness, an omnisexual stud from the 51st century. He has some of his old crew, as well as a few new faces, but you don't have to know anything about *Torchwood* or *Doctor Who* to enjoy the science-fiction shenanigans and campy dialogue. There's also a brilliant star turn from Bill Pullman as a death-row psychopath who somehow survives his own lethal injection.

Jon Benjamin Has a Van

Wednesdays, 10:30 p.m.
Comedy Central

You may know comedian H. Jon Benjamin as the voice of *Archer* – he's one of the hardest-working voice actors in the business. He also has an uncanny resemblance to the Men's Wearhouse guy. ("You're going to like the way you look!") But his new Comedy Central series is a riotous mix of fake news and skits, produced by Funny or Die. Benjamin and his crew get in the van to roam America, staging pranks everywhere from the Mexican border to public bathrooms, where Benjamin tries to host the quiz show *Cash Stall*. He also interviews a war veteran with "pre-traumatic stress disorder" – he lost his voice screaming with fear in basic training. There's something ramshackle about the whole show, yet that just adds to the gestalt – if a gag bombs, you know there will be another equally obnoxious one in less than a minute.

Childrens Hospital

Thursdays, midnight, Adult Swim

A group of children play soccer on the grass. Their ball rolls under a fence marked "Quicksand Farm." One of the girls whispers, "If you go get the ball, we'll let you play 'German soldier, girl prisoners' with us again." Before you know it, a little boy is sinking in quicksand, which means it's go time for the *Childrens Hospital* team. Rob Corddry's absurdist romp is one of the funniest and most morally indefensible shows out there, with a deep bench that includes Ken Marino, Megan Mullally, Henry Winkler and Corddry himself in terrifying clown makeup. Guest star: Sarah Silverman as Corddry's long-lost clown love, whom he left years ago, telling her, "I gotta travel the Earth and bring the healing power of laughter to children. Plus I really want to bang an Asian chick." For bonus laughs, there's the spinoff parody procedural, *NTSF: SD: SUV:: – National Terrorism Strike Force: San Diego: Sport Utility Vehicle::.*

Teen Wolf **Mondays, 10 p.m., MTV**

How many times have you sat around watching your battered VHS tape of *Teen Wolf* and telling yourself, "Man, this movie was incredible. Michael J. Fox? A genius! But who is going to carry on his vision into the 21st century?" Finally, MTV has answered the call, remaking a comedy that nobody else would ever think needed a remake. The premise is *Twilight* with werewolves, with Tyler Posey as the high school loser who gets lycanthropic. The strange thing about *Teen Wolf* is how dark and serious it is, with nocturnal cinematography and labored attempts to build suspense – it's almost like they're trying to make a real horror movie here. But it can be affecting, since being a werewolf is always such an apt metaphor for the adolescent experience. Being in high school and being a beast with taboo blood-lust urges are basically the same thing.

BAD MOON RISING Posey tries to fill Michael J. Fox's role.

Suits **Thursdays, 10 p.m., USA**

USA Network continues its stranglehold on breezy Eighties-style dramas about swaggering meatballs in designer threads. On this channel, you're never more than a few minutes away from some yuppie asshole putting on his shades and saying, "Let's *do* this." *Suits* is another show about Manhattan corporate lawyers, but with a bit of *Fringe* thrown in. Patrick J. Adams plays a stoner scam artist who never finished college but memorized all the legal books so he could make cash taking other people's law-school entrance exams. But he dreams of something bigger, so he joins a white-shoe law firm, where his new mentor Gabriel Macht walks around saying things like, "I'm not about caring. I'm about winning!" (Why can't he be about both? "I could explain it to you – but then I'd have to care about you." Snap!) Can a slick Harvard Law closer and a self-taught legal whiz team up to solve some tough cases? Can they make their own rules? Will they meet some hot-to-trot ladies? If you're a fan of the USA formula, you already know the answers. Not to mention most of the dialogue.

Ice Loves Coco

Sundays, 10:30 p.m., E!

E! Network's latest contribution to the "domestic-bliss reality show starring Playmates with asses the size of Escalades" genre stars Coco, the model who's married to Ice-T. These lovebirds are a fun couple – even for old-school hip-hop fans who fondly remember Ice's first wife, Darlene, from his album covers. This will no doubt end up as your Sunday-night-drinking companion of the summer.

LADY-KILLER Ice-T and his real housewife

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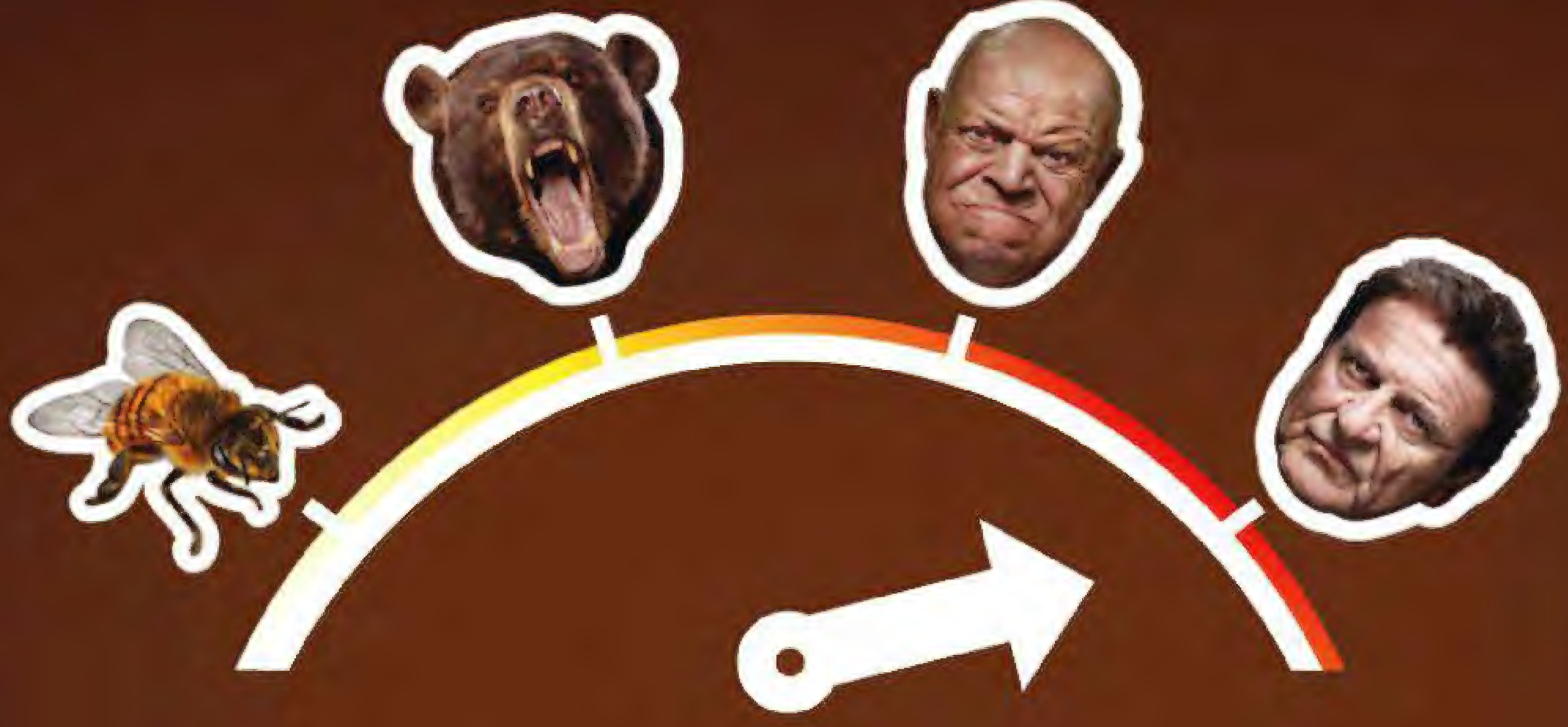

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Olbermann says his new show means he no longer has to "game the system."

Olbermann Hits Back

In a candid interview, the host of *Countdown* discusses why he left MSNBC – and how he plans to get even

★ *By Mark Binelli* ★

KEITH OLBERMANN HOBbles into an expensive seafood restaurant in Manhattan on a recent afternoon with the assistance of a long, retractable cane. Maneuvering past startled diners, the former *Countdown* host mutters over his shoulder, "The joke is, it's apparently not as easy to leave NBC as it looks."

Wincing, Olbermann lowers himself into a round booth. He explains that he injured one of his feet exercising: a stress fracture, brought on by his use of special five-toed running shoes. Olbermann being Olbermann, he'd decided to use his lameness as a teachable moment – not for *himself,* of course, but for rude New Yorkers. He had taken to planting himself in front of subway passengers who fail to vacate seats meant for the disabled and just glowering. Recounting the tale, Olbermann's delight grows, as if he can't believe the luck of having been given permission to yell at people in public and not seem insane.

That said, by any number of conventional indicators, the past six months have not been stellar ones for Olbermann, whose cane might well have been a prop assigned by a scriptwriter fond of heavy-handed symbolism. In January, the anchor abruptly parted ways with MSNBC, the cable network he spent eight years rebranding as a progressive alternative to Fox News. The previous November, he'd been suspended for donating money to three Democratic candidates for Congress. Despite an official statement describing a joint parting of the ways, no one ever really buys a breakup's depiction as "mutual," and many speculated that Olbermann had been fired.

Whatever happened – both sides signed a nondisclosure agreement as part of the severance – the fact that a major corporation allowed such a marquee name to walk away from a contract only fed long-standing rumors of Olbermann's difficulty as both an employee and boss. These rumors gained further credence with the recent release of an oral history of ESPN, another network Olbermann played a crucial role in giving a unique identity, through his hosting of *SportsCenter*. In the book, many of Olbermann's former colleagues describe him as brilliant but insufferable. Admits one anchor, "We felt not so much relief when Keith left as unrestrained fucking joy."

Olbermann has had to keep his foot elevated for several hours every day, and he's used part of the time to read the ESPN book. His review? "I wish them well with it," he says, "but it's a bad sign when someone who worked at the network falls asleep while reading the part about himself."

At the moment, he's mostly consumed with his return to cable television on June 20th, on Al Gore's Current TV. Once again, a struggling network is pinning its hopes at reinvention on Olbermann. Will the third time be yet another charm? If the title of Olbermann's new show, *Countdown With Keith Olbermann*, is any indication, it

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won't be a radical departure from his old show. So far, he's announced contributors ranging from the expected (Michael Moore, ROLLING STONE's Matt Taibbi) to the surprising (comedian Richard Lewis, PBS documentarian Ken Burns). Still, Olbermann will have his work cut out for him at Current. The channel averages only 23,000 viewers in prime time, and he'll be programmed alongside reality shows like *What Did I Do Last Night?* ("A party girl is horrified by footage of her drunken antics from the night before . . . from table-dancing to flashing her breasts.")

Long-term, though, Olbermann has big plans for the place. His mandate is nothing less than to build an entire network around his show, one populated with righteous liberal voices like his own and perhaps, once contracts expire, former colleagues like Rachel Maddow – a network, in fact, that sounds remarkably like MSNBC. "They thought I was going to go away for so long that nobody would bring me back," Olbermann says, sounding surprised by the stupidity of his enemies.

Olbermann with his new boss, Al Gore

Let's start with the new show. Are you going to be able to do things you've always been dying to do but couldn't?

I interviewed everybody who's going to work for the show. I selected the interns. I'm not saying I interviewed 350 people, but I got the finalists for every position. Everybody on this staff is equally invested in the risks involved. I don't know that there's going to be anything hugely different that's visible to the viewer. It's not going to be like, "I'm going to do the last half of the show topless." But the freedom from the wear and tear of having to get past a bunch of people mumbling, "Oh, I don't know. . . ." It's the key to the operation, it really is.

Will that continue once the show starts?

People say, "What happens if we get the call?" [from Current headquarters in San Francisco]. I say, "I've talked to them about this. If they're going to call, the likelihood is they're going to call and say, 'How come you weren't louder about this? How come you didn't yell more?'" I said to Al, "You know, every time people have trusted me to know what I'm talking about, I actually get small-c conservative." He said, "Let's not overdo that."

At Current, television is all we do – that's our business. We don't have amusement parks I have to worry about, we don't have environmental cases against us, we don't have a series of outdoor-advertising companies. If there's a decision between making money versus offending somebody, it will be a clean either/or – there won't be 19 other divisions that have some sort of say in the process. I'm not being critical of NBC. I just think people can trust what we do to be entirely based on the news merits. It will be that simple kind of old-fashioned television news operation of the Sixties and Seventies that had the proverbial Chinese wall around them to keep them away from concerns about advertisers. What we won't have is any concern that I have to somehow game a system to make sure I can continue to do what I want to do.

Were you ever censored by MSNBC?

No. What were they going to do about it? It was live. I will say this. Nobody ever said, "If you say this, you're going to be fired."

It's not about "NBC is evil." It's about that media structure – CBS, ABC, CNN, even some of the smaller operations are now multinationals, with these extraordinarily diverse holdings. The corporation is one of the great unheralded human inventions of destruction. It is a way to absolve from any personal liability a bunch of people. They form together in a massive id and they do whatever they want. In a corporate setting, there's nothing to stop Rupert Murdoch or Disney from doing whatever the hell they want with the news. They could turn it into propaganda for the Chinese government or the socialist party of America, and who's going to stop them?

When did things start to change for you at MSNBC?

It was three years ago, when Tim Russert died. One of the reasons I got as far as I got was that Tim was there to run interference for me. He never made a big deal out of the fact that he probably was my biggest supporter within the network. He used to go to them and say, "Leave him alone, we can handle the blowback, I'll take care of it." After he died, Maureen, his wife, told me that she used to have to wrest the channel-changer away from him every night, because he loved to watch the show. She said, "You deal with this all day and you have to watch it again?" He said, "I have to see what he's saying about it, it's the best." I teared up and said, "I didn't know that." She said, "He thought you already had a big enough head."

During the 2008 election, Tom Brokaw publicly criticized you for "going too far" in injecting commentary into your campaign coverage. Do you think there's something to the idea of keeping a division between opinion and news? Or is the notion of the impartial journalist essentially bullshit?

[*Taking a piece of paper from his wallet*] You saw I reached before you said the name. Let me read this to you. You can see how old it is – it already came apart. March 5th, 2008, Wednesday morning, 9:45 a.m. "Keith, game ball goes to you for last night. I've been at this for 40 years and have a full appreciation for how tricky it is to go from commentator to anchor, get the news out, manage the many egos, make sure lots of different points of view are represented, maintain your own place in the proceedings, you did it all splendidly." You can see the name of who sent that [*Tom Brokaw*].

So there you have it. I've never shared that with anybody before. Now you have a private comment that he didn't seem to remember when he made his public comment five months later.

Why do you carry that around?

Originally I carried it around because it was confirmation from somebody I had great respect for. What he said there was that you can be a commentator and an anchor, you can get your points across and yet be neutral when you're supposed to be neutral. From one of the best in the business, it meant a great deal to me. Then what it meant to me is, "Wow, things change fast after people like Russert die."

Why did you give money to Rep. Gabrielle Giffords and two other Democrats when you knew there was a rule against it?

People say, "Why did you think you could get away with donating to Demo-

Contributing editor MARK BINELLI *profiled Keith Olbermann in RS 1021.*

GABI PORTER/CURRENT TV

crats?" Nobody ever asks me why I donated to those three Democrats. I discovered from a friend of mine who knows Arizona politics really well that all three had spent a lot of money, and I mean a *lot* of money, protecting themselves from assassination threats. To me, as a small-d democrat, as a member of a democracy, it pissed me off. I thought, "I'm going to help defray their expenses." That's all it was.

Does it bother you that your departure from MSNBC came the same month as the shooting in Tucson? It seemed like the network felt they needed to tone things down.

Number one, I was the first guy to go on the air and say we should all tone things down. If the network felt that pressure, they were feeling it from me. Number two, I had begun to remove things from my office, the valuable stuff, and take them home in October.

Really? Were you worried they were going to lock you out?

No. There are just some things you don't want to have misplaced. They throw out a box by mistake, and suddenly a photo of Shoeless Joe Jackson at the 1919 World Series taken by a fan is gone forever. So I'd pick it up and put it in my bag and take it home. Members of my staff would go, "What happened to Shoeless Joe?" I'd say, "I'm just using him at home now."

So that far back . . .

Right, 2008 was the first time I thought, "Maybe I should take some of this stuff home."

Were you out looking for another gig?

No. As late as December, I could still see a path by which if we re-established certain boundaries, that I could stay longer. So when I took those things home, I didn't nail them to the wall – they were ready to go back into the office if need be.

It came across like an abrupt firing – there was no announcement ahead of time.

You can imagine the atmosphere between me and NBC in the months of November into December. The last hope that we could work something out vanished just before New Year's. I called them the day Gaby was shot and said, "Do you want me to come in?" and they said, "Yes." They were kind of surprised. I said, "I want to comment on this – I think we need to tone down the dialogue."

It seems you were doing your own soul-searching about that sort of tonal stuff for months. Did the Jon Stewart critique about the noise from both sides bother you, coming from someone I presume you respect?

I really don't know. I always analyze that sort of stuff internally. I always say, "Is this too much, is this too little, am I wrong about this?" All the things that people like me supposedly don't do, I do. I come from a world where there's a final score; if it's 6-3, it means the guys who scored six won the game. In politics, you can have an opinion as to who won and who's really in charge. So for me, that environment requires constant re-examination. I sweat every time I've ever done a "Special Comment." Trust me, there are comments I've started to write and said, "Nope, you're wrong."

Any moments you regret?

Scott Brown. I did two commentaries right around the election in which I described him as a homophobe, a racist. I was a little distracted – it was at the worst point of my father's decline, and I thought I was doing everybody a favor to continue to work through that. When I got criticized for the first comment, I did it again out of defiance – "I'll show you." It wasn't until Stewart took off on me that I said, "You're right, I've been over-the-top."

Did you ever intentionally make a defiant gesture toward the network, just because you knew it would bother them?

No, no, not at all. My conduct on the air, never. You don't screw with the product. I can't think of an instance at MSNBC where anything I said on the air was influenced by what was going on behind the scenes. Maybe a couple of times, where they didn't want to put Rachel on, and I was saying to them, "This is the next great host, I recognize her as one circus freak could recognize another."

Are you still close with her?

[*Pause*] Yes and no. We had a very brotherly/sisterly relationship. I was normally in her office or she in mine, four out of five days, just to throw the crap around. Several times I talked her out of storming out of the place, and several times she talked me out of storming out. But since I left, I've kept my distance from all my friends I couldn't bring with me. I hope I'm employing all of them someday, but at the moment there is a somewhat chilled view of me at NBC. I don't think they expected this would be the outcome. They expected "OK, he's going to go away now, probably for so long that nobody will be interested in bringing him back."

You think they thought that?

They definitely had no idea that I'd be back on the air June 20th, I promise you that – and against my replacement.

Did you ever worry you wouldn't find another outlet for what you want to do?

No. My manager and I had long discussed the prospects of going somewhere else. We thought there's got to be another network that is looking for a new identity and sees the same opportunity we do. We figured it might take some time – but then, "Ring ring. Keith, this is Al Gore."

How soon was it that he contacted you?

Saturday, the day after my last show.

You broke the news of your departure on the show that Friday. At what point did you know that would be your last day?

I'm trying to think what I can tell you about this legally. I was pretty sure that was the last day at the start of that day. I had hoped everything would be finalized and we'd have a meeting in the afternoon with the staff so that I could brace them for it. My primary regret, the one that will not change in dimension or sting, is the fact that most of the people involved in the show found out when I said, "This will be the last edition of *Countdown*. I'll explain after this break." The reason it happened that way was because it was only finalized during the preceding commercial break.

So you're staring out at the camera people, watching the looks on their faces when you said this?

The people on that show felt like they'd been hit by a storm out of nowhere. Many of them sensed there were going to be changes, but they certainly didn't think it would be announced like that. It didn't have to be that way. It wasn't because of faults on my end of the deal, but I still feel as if I did that to those people. There was a lot of emotion and a lot of regret.

What were your initial discussions with Al Gore like when he called?

"Would you like to do *Countdown* on Current?" and I said, "Yes. Can you afford to do it?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Who's going to be in charge of it?" He said, "You are." Then our people just went in and built the damn thing in two weeks. It was that quick.

You didn't have time to grow a beard or be depressed.

No, and I didn't have time to sit around going, "Gee, I wonder if there's a better environment for me." No, Al Gore's going to be my boss! I slept on it overnight, and we started going with it on Sunday. Everything since then has been like that. "What do you need?" We're not doing this new show to find a place for me to have a home – we're going to do this right. We're going to take MSNBC's business away from them – that's the idea, to do it better.

Let's talk about politics. Do you think the Republican push for cutting the budget is going to blow up in their faces?

This is about the nature of the authoritarian mind. Once the Republicans get rolling, they assume they're going to win everything. They are zealots, and zealots

> **"NBC expected 'OK, he's going away now, probably for so long that nobody will be interested in bringing him back.'"**

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assume the last five percent of whatever their plan is will be taken care of by their own greatness or momentum or divinity. They never sit and think, "We got 95 percent of what we want, let's quit and solidify what we have." They always overreach. Do you really think Barack Obama would have been elected president of the United States if George Bush had been a moderate?

What's been your biggest disappointment with Obama so far?

The night before the inauguration, I wrote a "Special Comment" criticizing him – it was obvious that he was not going to hold the Bush administration accountable. He said, "We don't want to waste this administration playing politics." I said to myself, "OK, that's you – but the Republicans want to waste your administration playing politics."

We had laws broken in this country that involved the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people in another country, and more than 4,000 people from our country. Not acting against Dick Cheney or John Yoo or Alberto Gonzales indemnifies the next president, Republican or Democrat. It lets them know exactly what they can get away with. To me, that remains a cloud over Obama's entire administration.

Everything else, particularly on health care reform, he was right and I was wrong. I thought he needed to be in there with a mallet, pounding away from Day One. Instead, he came in at the end and saved it. His health care reform wasn't sufficient by any stretch of the imagination, but he was right – it's a start, and it will grow as years go by.

He's good at the rope-a-dope.

He's very good. Two years ago I attended an off-the-record lunch he held for columnists. It was two hours, unplugged, no restrictions on what he couldn't say. It was like watching a great play – just masterful. I was thinking, "Bottom line is, this is one of the 1,000 smartest guys in the country." And how many of those have we ever elected president?

On your new show, will you continue to do the nonpolitical elements you've done, like reading stories by James Thurber?

Al is a big fan of that.

It was a risky thing to do.

The way it came about is a great story. I read to my father in the hospital, and the thing he enjoyed most was Thurber. He said, "You should do that on the show." I said, "But it's a newscast," and he said, "How often have I ever suggested you do anything?"

He wasn't someone who would do that?

No. He was my public-relations agent and my biggest fan. One time, he said I should color my hair. My dad had a comb-over. I said, "Some of the hair in your comb-over dates to the Eisenhower administration. The last person on earth I want to listen to about fucking hair is you." He laughed. That was the only other time, and I've had a lot of conversations with him about my career and about television.

Were your politics close?

He was much more cynical than I am. The first thing I remember politically is having a baby sitter, because my folks were going next door to eat with the neighbors. And before I went to bed, they were already back in the house, and my dad was in a rage. They had been talking politics, and the neighbors called my father a communist. He said, "That's not communism. We are in America – that's called 'do unto others.'" My father could dismember your argument faster than anybody in the world.

After he went into the last deep sleep – he had no strength left at all and he fell asleep, huge white-cell count, huge infection, 30,000 or something like that – I read Thurber's "The Peacelike Mongoose," which he loved. It's a fable, and it drips with political import. The next day, I got an e-mail from the Thurber Literary

Estate, and I went, "Oh, boy. . . ." I figured it was about copyrights. But it turned out that Thurber's daughter Rosie, 85 years old now, watches *Countdown* every night. Not only that – and this is where you start to believe in forces larger than yourself – she had been approached the week before by a publisher who wanted to include "The Peacelike Mongoose" in an anthology for high school students, on one condition: They wanted to cut the line where someone accuses the peacelike mongoose of being a "mongoose-sexual." Rosie and her daughter went back and forth about it, and then Rosie sits down to watch *Countdown*, and I read "The Peacelike Mongoose" without any interruption or editing whatsoever. The phone rings, it's her daughter: "I think you just got your answer, Mom."

You and Glenn Beck are both leaving your networks at the same time. What do you think of him as a broadcaster?

Glenn Beck and me, we're in the same boat now. We're both off the Fox reservation. People who think his leaving Fox News was some kind of change in tone caused by the Giffords thing are as wrong about that as they are when they apply it to me. I'm sure that he viewed this entirely as a great business proposition for himself. In Beck's point of view – nobody's gotten this yet, but I know exactly where he's coming from – Beck looked at this and said, "Why am I letting these Fox people take some of my money? I don't need them."

Beck's skill is to listen to a guy like Roger Ailes and then turn his message into a national anthem. It's a skill like juggling chain saws. "All right, great. And when you miss, what happens – you cut yourself in half, don't you?" "Oh, yeah, hadn't thought of that." *Bzzz.*

Any broadcasters you admire these days?

Within news, no. Most of them can't be themselves because they're terrified of losing their jobs. But David Letterman never gets the credit he deserves. He's not afraid to ask any question. If he turned that into a sit-down format with politicians on Current, he'd be terrific at it – tremendously smart, very responsive, easily catches people in contradictions, and relentless. The other one who is tremendously relevant in terms of his grasp of reality and America is Craig Ferguson. His openings are marvelous, and often brilliantly insightful.

Comedians are the only ones paid to tell the truth in public discourse. Everybody else – politicians, news broadcasters, religious figures – we're all paid to be oracles, when in fact we are like a good public-relations man. A good public-relations man keeps you away from the public, and if you have relations, he keeps that hidden.

So you aspire to the honesty of a comedian?

Now you see why I wanted a venue like the one I'm being given. It's not an exact match. I can't say anything I want; there will be some things I'm sure I'll have to temper. But I can't think of any of them off the top of my head, and when I encounter them, it will be like, "Crap, that was the first one in eight months." That's why I view this as the biggest step-up of my career. The instantaneous reaction to this was, "He's going into the far wilderness." No, it's virgin forest, and I own it, and I'm bringing a house with me. I have the opportunity to rebuild it better and start looking for people to do the next hour and the next hour, the whole operation. We'll make mistakes, but it will be such a great relief to not have to spend all day executive-icizing, and just go out and do what I'm really good at. This is as close as I'll get to a comedian's freedom.

Olbermann's Outtakes
Keith on the GOP, MSNBC and more at rollingstone.com/olbermann.

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The Hangover's superfreak is one of Hollywood's biggest stars – but he's trying his best to stay the slacker he's always been

By Josh Eells

The High Times and Surreal Life of Zach Galifianakis

Photograph by **THEO WENNER**

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SO THERE'S ZACH GALIFIANAKIS, WEARING A tuxedo at a fancy afterparty in the backyard of the French ambassador's house. He just came from the White House Correspondents' Dinner, where he laughed so hard at Obama's Donald Trump jokes that his buddy Jon Hamm had to tell him to keep it down, because Trump was right there. Now he's nibbling on hors d'oeuvres on a patio so heavy with Hollywood-Beltway power it threatens to collapse under its own self-importance. Sean Penn and Scarlett Johansson are here. So are Bill O'Reilly and Sarah Palin. Rupert Murdoch is kibitzing with Michael Bloomberg, and Carmelo Anthony is eating French toast and being tall. Inside, Newt Gingrich and Buzz Aldrin are talking Republicans, or maybe space.

Galifianakis spends time catching up with some comedy pals – Amy Poehler, Paul Rudd, Andy Samberg, Seth Meyers – but eventually he needs a break from the schmoozing, so he wanders down to the pool. There, in the ethereal aquamarine glow, he's introduced to two couples: Jane Lynch from *Glee* and her wife, and the redheaded guy from *Modern Family* and his boyfriend. Galifianakis only watches *Frontline*, so he's never seen either show, but he was raised a good Southern boy, and he greets them warmly.

"Nice to meet you! I didn't realize it was Gay Night by the swimming pool."

"Now, *I* thought I was being really clever," he says when he recounts the story in New York a few days later. "I walked away like, *Another good one!* But my girlfriend, who is a very wise person, said, 'I gotta tell you, Zach – that did not go over well. You have to watch people's reactions!'"

As his character in *The Hangover* might say: Classic Zach. He sees an opening and he goes for it, consequences be damned. It's the kind of unchecked comedic id he wields as *The Hangover*'s Alan Garner – the potbellied man-child with a purse full of Skittles and a propensity for not wearing pants – as well as his MO in real life. Like the time he texted *Hangover* director Todd Phillips – who was raised without a dad – on Father's Day, and said, "Thinking of you today." Or the time his friend and *Hangover* co-star Bradley Cooper called to tell him that he and his girlfriend had just broken up, and Galifianakis' response was, "She saw *Limitless*?"

"Inappropriateness is funny to me," Galifianakis says. "Rudeness is hilarious. I'm in awe of the non-self-awareness of it – the idea that you can be so clueless as to be that disrespectful of another human being."

Somehow, people love him for it. "I think he's cultivated sort of a harmless persona, where he can say something weird and you're not threatened by it," says his close friend A.D. Miles, the head writer for *Late Night With Jimmy Fallon*, who first met Galifianakis when Miles waited on him at a Bennigan's 20 years ago. "He's just the kindest motherfucker," adds Cooper. "You're happy to be the butt of his joke." Phillips calls him a "conductor of mayhem," but also says he "has this natural gift, which is that he was born with these incredibly warm eyes. It enables him to get away with so much stupidity and say so many awful things, because his eyes project that he didn't really mean it."

Galifianakis came up in the alt-comedy scene, where he specialized in conceptual one-liners ("Have you seen that show on Lifetime about that woman…?") and bizarre performance-art bits, like lip-syncing to songs from *Annie* or doing a set as a comic from 1778. But as *Saturday Night Live*'s Meyers says, "It's a mistake to label him an alternative comic. I don't know anyone who doesn't like what he does."

Over the past few years, mainstream Hollywood has crept steadily Zach-ward, tapping his off-center charms for comedies like *Due Date* (where he played a strange, bearded man with a dog), dramas (*It's Kind of a Funny Story* – strange, bearded man in a mental hospital), as well as a starring role in the HBO comedy *Bored to Death* (strange, bearded man who draws comic books). And, of course, the *Hangover* blockbusters. But he hasn't made it easy for them. When Sean Penn called to offer him a role in *Into the Wild*, Galifianakis told him he had an appointment at Arby's and to "send my Jews the script." When he first met with Phillips and Robert Downey Jr. to discuss *Due Date*, he rode his bike 15 miles to Downey's house, showed up sweaty and late, and jokingly insulted a woman Downey used to live with. By the end of dinner, he'd drunk four glasses of wine and couldn't ride home, so Phillips had to put his bike in his trunk.

"There's just a lot of stuff in Hollywood that doesn't excite him," says comedian Patton Oswalt, another good friend. "He doesn't mean it in a mean or dismissive way – he's just not into it." The first time Galifianakis hosted *SNL* was the day before the Oscars, and according to his friend Sarah Silverman, the Oscar people wanted to fly him out to L.A. the next morning to be on the broadcast. "Zach was just like, 'Nah,'" she says, admiringly. "What's cooler than hosting *Saturday Night Live* and then jetting to L.A. to be on the Oscars? I guess saying, 'Nah.'"

THE PHONE BUZZES – IT'S A text from Galifianakis. "Running five minutes late. I got into a discussion with a pigeon. Lost track of time."

He arrives at the East Village bar five minutes later, wearing a blue-and-green-striped polo and brownish pants. His hair is still short from when he shaved his head on *SNL* a few weeks ago (he walked out for the closing credits with a mohawk and announced, "Unfortunately, we didn't get to the Mr. T sketch"), and his celebrated beard does not disappoint. In his pocket is a rolled-up issue of *The New Yorker*, and around his neck, a pair of those black-foam headphones you get for free on a plane.

"Hi," he says. "I'm Zatch Gassafanasky."

He takes a seat at a sidewalk table and proceeds to remove his left shoe. He just walked here from his Brooklyn apartment, three miles across the bridge, and he thinks there might be something stuck inside. "I think it might be a dime. Do you know a good shoe detective?"

Galifianakis walks a lot. Back when he was broke and living in New York in the mid-Nineties, waiting tables at a drag-queen restaurant owned by Kurdish rebels, he liked to get drunk and wander through the subway tunnels at night, moving over whenever a train came by. ("It's very roomy down there.") Lately, his walks have been

"Inappropriateness is funny to me. I'm in awe of the idea of being so clueless that you're disrespectful of another human being."

Contributing editor JOSH EELLS *profiled Kevin Smith in RS 1130.*

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Zach Attack

(1) Galifianakis with his dad, Harry, in Las Vegas in 2009. **(2)** As a child in Wilkesboro, North Carolina. **(3)** Galifianakis majored in communications at NC State, but after failing his final class, he moved to New York. **(4)** With his longtime girlfriend, Quinn, in L.A. last year.

more fitness-related: He just read six pages of *The South Beach Diet*, and his goal is to lose 20 pounds by September. He's already lost nine – or as he puts it, 36 iPhones. "I want to feel what it's like to be light."

One of his go-to routines is making fun of his beard-and-belly look – calling it the Marijuana Santa Claus, the Fat Garden Gnome, the Amber Alert. But in person, he's handsome, with small, delicate hands and a face younger than his 41 years.

He orders a chardonnay. He's more of a beer guy, but he can't drink it anymore because it clogs his sinuses. He sounds a little congested all the time. ("I'm Greek," he jokes. "My body produces feta cheese.") When the waitress comes back, he asks her for a paper cup, then takes out a wad of something and stuffs it in his mouth. Was that dip? "Yeah – you want some?" He says he started four years ago, when he was shooting *Into the Wild*. "They gave me prunes, but I couldn't talk with them in my mouth. So I said just give me the real thing. And I loved it. It's embarrassing." But the grossness of it is also funny.

Here are some other things Galifianakis thinks are funny: Skittles. Long John Silver's. Hoobastank. Tubas. *That's So Raven*. Mispronunciation. Miscommunication. Puns.

Also, racism. He has one joke that goes, "That show *The Amazing Race* – is that about white people?" and another that goes, "I like dark comedies. That's why I like the Wayans Brothers." One of his favorite racist jokes he can't tell anymore, because too many people didn't get it. It starts with him confessing that he's used the term "sand nigger," then adding that he's never said it about someone from the Middle East. "When I use it," he says, "it's 'Get off the sand, nigger, volleyball is a white man's game!'"

He knows it's a bad joke – maybe even indefensible. But that's also why he loves it. "I heard that word from rednecks growing up, and it fucking drove me crazy. But I feel like, in context, people should know it's a joke."

He was raised the middle of three kids in Wilkesboro, North Carolina, in a part of the Appalachian foothills most famous for its NASCAR track and a chicken plant. His mom, Mary Frances, is Scots-Irish and has roots in North Carolina going back generations; his dad, Harry, was a heating-oil salesman and ex-college-football player (nickname: "the Greasy Greek") who moved to America when he was three. Galifianakis' Uncle Nick was a U.S. congressman who once ran against Jesse Helms.

"Zachy was a great little baby," his dad says. "Went to bed when he was supposed to. Never really cried." One of the few times in his life he ever got in trouble was when he said something inappropriate in school and had to go to the principal's office. "It was a word that rhymed with another word," his dad recalls. "I think it was something about ass."

Galifianakis had an "incredibly happy" childhood – soccer team, Eagle Scouts – and says he "wasn't a nerd or any of that stuff." But he was also small for his age, and quiet and emotional. "You know when you see sensitive kids, how things just affect them?" he says. "That was me." One day he wanted to be an architect, the next day a Wimbledon champ. But his dad says he knew all along that Galifianakis would be an actor. When he was four, he pointed at the TV and said, "How do I get in there?" He wanted to move straight to New York after high school, but his parents persuaded him to try NC State instead. He didn't have many friends. He says it was "a lonely time." (Dare we call him a…*one-man wolfpack?*) He majored in communications and took a class called Mud Studies. In 1992, when he failed his final class by a point, he moved to New York and started taking acting classes.

The next few years were straight out of a struggling-comic montage: the shitty apartments (walk-in closet; crack house), the shitty jobs (busboy; nanny; menu-passer-outer). He had his first stand-up gig in the back of a Times Square hamburger joint, where he told a joke about a girl who offered to let him crash on her futon. His reply: "I don't sleep on anything that rhymes with crouton."

Success came very slowly. He did a couple of sitcoms (he calls them "shitcoms"), and a lot of bad movies. He was in *Bubble Boy* for two minutes, and *Corky Romano* for 59 seconds. In a movie called *Out Cold*, he played a snowboarder who gets his penis stuck in a hot-tub jet. At one point, he was hired to write for *SNL*, where he pitched a sketch to albino-python-era Britney Spears in which she's being interviewed on *Entertainment Tonight* when she suddenly, and without explanation, starts bleeding from the mouth. She didn't laugh. "I remember staring at the ground for, like, 20 seconds, just silent," Galifianakis says. "45,000 open mics, and I'm trying to impress this 18-year-old pop star." He was there two weeks.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES; JEFFREY MAYER/WIREIMAGE; COURTESY OF ZACH GALIFIANAKIS, 2

ZACH GALIFIANAKIS

Hollywood's Unlikely Star

(1) Galifianakis performing at the Knitting Factory in Los Angeles in 2004. **(2)** A scene from *The Hangover Part II* in Bangkok. **(3)** An episode of *Between Two Ferns*, with Sean Penn. **(4)** At a Lakers game in March; Galifianakis gave himself a mohawk on *SNL* but "Unfortunately, we didn't get to the Mr. T sketch."

His longest job was on a Fox drama called *Tru Calling*, about a mortuary attendant played by Eliza Dushku who could commune with the dead. He tried his hardest to get fired. He'd tell Dushku she was eating her way to cancellation, or stand up after a table read and say to the writer, "Great script, Karen," and throw the script in the trash. When he got his wish and the show was canceled, he did another show called *Dog Bites Man*, which he hated for a different reason. It was about a fake local-news team that interviewed real people, like *The Daily Show* meets *Borat*; he got to do things like ask the Grand Wizard of the KKK if he'd seen *Big Momma's House 2*, which he still considers a highlight. But mostly he was uncomfortable preying on innocent people's kindness and vulnerability. The worst was the day they interviewed a pastor at a megachurch, looking for some easy laughs, and the pastor opened up with a heartbreaking story about the death of his son. Galifianakis started crying and had to walk away.

He never really did commercials. "I tried a few times," he says. "The last one I went on, they wanted me to crawl on all fours and eat a cracker." He says he once turned down $700,000 to be a spokesman for Time Warner. After *The Hangover*, when offers were flooding in, he was also approached about doing something with Nike. "We had a conference call, and the first thing I said was, 'So, do you guys still have seven-year-olds making your stuff?'" That was pretty much the end of that.

For nine weeks in 2002, VH1 made the half-visionary, half-moronic decision to give Galifianakis his own talk show, *Late World With Zach*. He was a compelling host, which is to say, a terrible one. He couldn't care less what his "celebrity" guests (Art Alexakis! Wayne Brady!) had to say. He'd zone out, or slyly insult them; for a while he lobbied to have a trapdoor installed under their chairs. (The episode with a then-unknown Bradley Cooper is worth YouTubing.) When the show was canceled, the network kept him on the air for a few more weeks, and that's when things got really good: He did a monologue at a preschool ("Don't you hate it when you eat red Play-Doh and it ends up tasting like a blue crayon?"), and another on a city bus ("Tough bus, tough bus"). He called Rupert Murdoch a warmonger and VH1 executives pigs. It's around this time that you can start to see the DNA of the Web series he hosts now, *Between Two Ferns*, which is his fantasy version of what a talk show should be. (To Bruce Willis: "When you were making *The Whole Ten Yards*, were you ever worried it would be *too* good?")

Galifianakis has said he never wanted to be a star – that he was perfectly happy to play Bellhop Number Two and smoke his pot and have his little thing. On the other hand, A.D. Miles remembers him once

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: TODD WILLIAMSON/FILMMAGIC; MELINDA SUE GORDON/WARNER BROS.; COURTESY OF ZACH GALIFIANAKIS; GUS RUELAS/REUTERS/ZUMA PRESS.COM

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chasing Chris Rock down the street to ask for advice, which is not an act of someone who lacks ambition. "Honestly," says Phillips, "I think the hating of Hollywood is a little bit of a defense mechanism. There's a truth to it – Zach has a very severe bullshit detector – but I think some of it has to come from dealing with rejection for so long. Living in a van. Having to go to auditions in Burbank. People not getting it."

NOW, EVERYONE GETS IT. His *Hangover* lines ("The *real* Caesar's Palace," "ruh-*tard*") are modern classics, his visage a guaranteed laugh. He kind of wishes this weren't the case. "Nothing funny comes out of comfort," he says. "I think for a comic to get accolades goes against what brought them there in the first place. I get mad at the audience: 'How *dare* you like me?' I want them to be judgmental. But when you're making movies and stuff, that kind of goes away."

One night, Galifianakis does an unannounced stand-up set at a tiny theater in Manhattan. He emerges from a black curtain (he calls it "Precious' vagina") to surprised, rapturous applause, and pulls out a green five-inch-by-seven-inch Mead notebook into which he just scrawled a bunch of new jokes. "I'm gonna do some readings of sentences," he says. "They're supposed to be jokes – but right now most of them are still just sentences."

He flips the notebook open to the first page. "You know what I like to avoid when I put suntan lotion on my sister? Eye contact."

He turns the page. "This is a character I've been working on for a while called the Wrong Gesturing Guy." He clears his throat. "So I met this woman the other night. She, uh . . ." – he mimes a well-endowed chest – "has breast cancer."

(Galifianakis' characters are some of his best bits. There's the Timid Pimp: "Hi – Amber? Hi, it's Marcus. . . . Yeah, I can hold." The Pretentious Illiterate: "Uh, I *told* you. I don't know how to *read*." The Forgetful Vegan: "Man, that sure was good pepperoni pi—*fuck!*" The Guy From Queens Who's Obsessed With Cargo Shorts: "What are those, cargo shorts?" And a personal favorite, the Kid Who Doesn't Know, Down in His Living Room, That His Uncle, Upstairs, Has Suddenly Gone Deaf: "Uncle David? Uncle David . . . *Uncle David!*")

He flips another page. "What other goof-abouts do I have? OK. This is what I imagine it's like to be on the phone with James Franco." He holds his phone up to his ear. "Hello? Oh, hey, James. Oh, really? Good for you. Oh, you're doing that, too? That's cool, I didn't realize. Oh, really, no way. Wow, that too, huh? Oh, that's cool. Oh, you must be excited about that. . . ."

He flips the page again. "I'm not reading that one. It just says, 'I killed a dog with an air horn once.'"

After the set, he's outside on his phone when two fans walk up. They apologize for interrupting. "It's OK," he says, covering the mouthpiece. "It's just both my parents in the hospital." They snap a photo and walk away giggling.

Just a few steps later, he's stopped again.

"Hey, aren't you that guy from *The Hangover*?"

"No, no," he says, "I get that all the time."

"Really? You look a lot like him."

"No. I hate that guy. I think he's a terrible actor. And he's fat."

When Galifianakis says *The Hangover* ruined his life, he's only half-joking. He can't go five minutes without being approached – probably because he seems so approachable. His life is a constant barrage of minor intrusions. "I'm terrible about people wanting to take pictures with me," he says. "I'm a giant baby about it. They treat you like a cartoon. There's nothing you can do except make light of it. That's if I'm in the mood – sometimes I get superbummed."

"I'm not adjusting to fame well. It's made me more guarded. I get confused. I'm private, and I'm emotional, and I drink too much. I don't know. I have to figure it out."

He has a few different strategies when people ask for a picture. Sometimes he'll thank them, say he's a private person, and ask if he can shake their hand instead. Other times he'll deflect it with a joke: "Sorry, could we not? I'm with my husband. We haven't seen each other since Haiti." If he really wants to avoid them, he'll fake a phone call ("When's the funeral?"), and if he's trying to eat and somebody bothers him, he'll pretend they're a server: "Yeah, could I have the veggie burger, please? And the yogurt." A couple of weeks ago he was at an Indian restaurant when he caught a teenager trying to sneak a photo. So he gave him the finger. "I thought it was funny. A grown man giving a 15-year-old the finger. But they all put their cameras down. I felt terrible."

It's not any worse than what any famous person has to deal with. The difference is, Galifianakis is *out there*. He doesn't have a publicist. He doesn't have an assistant. He makes no attempts to cloister himself in VIP sections or corner booths – not because he likes the attention (he clearly doesn't) but because to do otherwise would be a concession to something, the first step down the road to becoming the kind of celebrity he hates.

Galifianakis says he has struggled with depression before. (Usually he follows his dad's advice: "Go to a park and talk to old people.") There's a great scene in one of his live DVDs where he talks about "the fragility of the human psyche," and how he thinks all comedians are a little mentally ill. It spooks him, the idea that his fame is outpacing him.

"I'll be honest with you: I'm not adjusting to it well. I don't mean that as a complaint. Most people wouldn't be well-adjusted. I just get confused by people asking me questions. For years, nobody asked me a question, ever. So now when someone says, 'Oh, you're going to be on the cover of ROLLING STONE,' my first reaction is, '*Ehhh*, I don't think that's a good idea. I mean, it's cool – but does it have to be the cover? What's Blink-182 doing these days?'"

He takes another sip of wine. "I think it's made me more guarded," he says. "I just like jokes, and I'm private, and I'm emotional, and I drink too much. I don't know. I have to figure it out."

After a few drinks, we decide to share a cab back to Brooklyn. "Taxi!" Galifianakis says, whistling at a passing bus. Eventually, a real cab stops, and soon we're zooming across the bridge under a 20-foot billboard with his face on it. He talks about how he ate a bunch of pot chocolates last night and walked around listening to the new Fleet Foxes record. I tell him that sounds like fun, and his eyes get wide: "Do you want to come over to my house and eat pot chocolates?"

We pull up to his apartment, on an industrial block in Brooklyn across the street from a pita bakery. "That fucking place," he says. "It's keeping me up at night." Then he catches himself, and slips into a mock-TV-announcer voice: "We'll be right back, with *Millionaires Complaining*!"

Inside, he's embarrassed by the luxury of the apartment. "HBO is renting this for us," he says. "We do not live like this." In the kitchen, his girlfriend, Quinn, is doing the dishes. They've been together for several years; she runs a nonprofit that helps fund Third World charities. When you ask Galifianakis if he has any crazy stories from filming *The Hangover Part II* in Bangkok, and he says Quinn has a great story about going to a Cambodian sex-slave camp, he's probably not joking. "Quinn is the coolest," he says. "The *coolest*."

They make drinks, and we head out to the roof deck. There's a single bird singing

The Fine Art of Being Offensive

Galifianakis pushes the boundaries of decency, logic and good taste – but there's nobody funnier

"Growing up, I was the only straight guy in an all-gay high school. The other kids would taunt me: 'Hey, Zach, where you going? To get some *pussy*?'"

"This year, my New Year's resolution was to stop saying 'Seacrest, out!' after I ejaculate."

"Remember the kid who had sex with his high school teacher? I heard on the news today that he died. Apparently he died of high-fiving."

"I live in L.A. and I had been drinking one night. So I was on the Walk of Fame and I saw Tony Danza's star and I started urinating on it, just yelling out, 'Who's the boss *now*?'"

"My girlfriend looks like Daryl Hannah, um, excuse me, Darrell Hammond."

"My grandmother treats me like a rock star. I guess that's why she lets me sign her tits. It takes forever."

"I want to combine the NAACP with Mothers Against Drunk Driving. It's called Mothers Against the Advancement of Colored People."

"I wear a lot of Axe Body Spray, but I live in a black neighborhood and it's called Ask Body Spray."

"It took me the longest time to realize I was a procrastinator."

"My girlfriend and I played charades with a deaf couple the other night. They were so good."

"I was going to do an impression of Dave Navarro looking in the mirror, but it takes so *long*."

"I have a lot of growing up to do. I realized that the other day in my fort."

One of Galifianakis' more bizarro bits: lip-syncing Annie songs.

in the darkness. "He's lonely," Galifianakis says. "He doesn't have any buddies."

He mentions Quinn was in Africa recently. I ask her where.

"Epcot Center," he says, spitting tobacco juice into a Snapple bottle.

Quinn smiles. "I was in Malawi."

I make a dumb joke about them adopting a kid.

"Yeah," Galifianakis says, "where is that kid?" He spits again. "Kate Middleton was his name. We named him while we were watching the wedding." He scratches his head. "We gotta find that kid."

He jokes, but he really does want to be a dad. "I've been wanting kids for 10 years. I'd love to adopt, have them naturally – all of it. I want, like, 15." He used to be a Big Brother to a boy with Asperger's. He also fantasized about adopting a kid and driving around the country in his orange Volkswagen van, doing stand-up in people's living rooms. "I was kind of obsessed with it for a couple of months. Then I found out it's very difficult for a guy with a van to adopt a kid."

Back inside, Quinn puts on a Beatles record. Galifianakis cuts up a pear. "Try this," he says. "This is the best pear you've ever had." It's a pretty good pear. On the other hand, we're also very high.

(He and marijuana go way back. When he lived in Vancouver a decade ago, he had a girlfriend named Watermelon who sold pot cookies on the beach. He has also said he took *G-Force* – that Disney action thriller about crime-fighting guinea pigs – because he was stoned when they asked him to audition.)

He says they need to get back to the farm. They have 70 acres down in North Carolina, near the Blue Ridge Parkway. Galifianakis calls it Farmageddon. (You may have seen him there, riding his tractor in the video he shot for Kanye West's "Can't Tell Me Nothing.") They grow pumpkins, blueberries, grapes; he recently planted a walnut tree. He also built a toolshed, and a barn for some goats. There's no cell service, no TV. Their closest neighbor is a dairy farmer named Junior, who calls Galifianakis "Hollywood" and gives him manure. It's the one place in the world where he can hang out and eat Bojangles' sausage biscuits and almost pretend like nothing has changed.

"This is going to sound so Norman Rockwell," Miles says, "but one time I was at the farm, and Quinn had found a bunch of kittens on the side of the road and was taking care of them. One night, she was sitting on the porch with all these kittens in her lap, and Zach walked around the corner on the other side of the screen door and gasped and covered his mouth. He was just so taken by that scene. That's a little peek into what he really cares about – those little moments of beauty."

JASON MERRITT/FILMMAGIC

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GALIFIANAKIS' LIFE HASN'T changed much, materially speaking. He still lives in the same ramshackle house in Venice, California, he's had since his shitcom days. He still drives the same old '98 Subaru. He says the only things he splurges on are good food and repaving his parents' driveway, and he doesn't even know how much he got paid for *The Hangover Part II*. When I tell him the reported figure was $5 million against four percent, he stares blankly. "I don't know what that means."

Basically, if this movie earns as much as the last one did, he gets $10 million.

"See, you say that. But I don't even know how to access my bank account. I don't know the thing."

So how does he get money?

"I have $10,000 in a Bank of America account. My accountant, whom I've had since I started doing open mics, occasionally I'll e-mail him and say, 'Will you tell me what's what?' And he does. It's kind of embarrassing. I'm smart, but I don't know what things mean. There's a lot of business terms – like 'fiduciary'? I don't know. I gotta educate myself more."

He rubs his eyes, like just thinking about money gives him a headache.

"But what is one to do?" It's not a rhetorical question.

"It's new to me," he says. "I see these people with mansions and stuff – I just find that bizarre. I don't know. I'll probably end up giving it away." He pauses, realizing how this could sound. "Not because – only because I'm lazy. I shouldn't say I'm giving it away. I don't know. I gotta get a rein on things."

Later this year, he has a small role in the new Muppets movie, playing a guy named Hobo Joe. (It's the fourth time he's played a homeless guy. He really likes it: They hardly have any lines.) He's also shooting an election comedy with Will Ferrell called *Southern Rivals*, where they play sparring politicians. For the first time in a while, he won't have a beard. He'd like to write something for himself, although he doubts he can pull it off; he's talked before about a screenplay called *Schindler's List 2: Let's Get This Party Started*, but that's probably a joke. He also fantasizes about holding up trains. "But in a Robin Hood way – with bows and arrows. No one does that anymore.

"But now they want to do a *Hangover III*," he continues. "I'm getting fricking phone calls already." He's excited about this one: According what he's heard, they ditch the format of the first two and help his character escape from a mental institution. Still, it's hard for him to take any movie too seriously when he's been to Malawian villages and had parents beg him for a pencil so their kids can do their schoolwork.

"It's a constant thing," he says. "If you're on the phone, talking about doing a movie with Ryan Reynolds, it's like – well, yeah, *do* a movie with Ryan Reynolds. Because then you can open a…"

A what? A school? A clinic?

He doesn't say. "You can do anything you want."

If Galifianakis is hesitant to open up too much about this, it's probably because he worries about sounding too Angelina – like he'd cheapen what he really cares about by making it into a thing. "Honestly," he says, "if I could talk about what means the most to me in life and stuff, I would. Eventually that's what I want to talk about. But I don't know if I can yet. It's hard."

Hard why?

He rubs his head again. "Because it's not jokes."

"Honestly, if I could talk about what means the most to me in life and stuff, I would. I want to talk about it. But I don't know if I can yet. It's hard, when it's not jokes."

IT'S GETTING LATE NOW. GALIFIANAKIS is telling stories. He talks with reverence about the old Greek traditions, how his dad used to kiss him on the lips when he dropped him off at high school. He says he has fond memories of visiting Greece when he was 14, watching his great-aunt squat on the dinner table to demonstrate the proper way to take a dump. He wants to live in Greece before he gets married, to try to reconnect with something true about himself.

For all his outré weirdness, Galifianakis is kind of old-fashioned. He doesn't like to curse. He thinks reality TV is a scourge – that we're not far off from *Celebrity Toilet Cams* or *World's Funniest Gay Bashings*. When little kids tell him they loved *The Hangover*, he'll tell them they have terrible parents. "And I mean it."

"I saw that Ke$ha woman the other day," he says. She'd e-mailed him about getting a drink, and a few days later, he ran into her in a bar. "She was sitting by herself, and I walked up to her and said, 'Listen, I got your e-mail. Your music is really bad! I don't know who listens to it, but I imagine it's, like, six-year-olds – and it's a bad message.'"

Phillips says Galifianakis can do pretty much whatever he wants at this point: "He's a phenomenal actor." But his true love, Phillips says, will always be comedy. "It's such a joyous thing for him. When you laugh at one of his jokes, his eyes just light up. It's not like he's desperate for it. But there is no greater joy to him than the sound of people laughing."

Cooper agrees. "Zach has a need, deep down, to find humor all the time. It kind of gives him meaning." He says that when his father died last year, Galifianakis was the first call he made from the hospital. "I can't remember what he said, but within minutes, we were just laughing so hard."

But this approach does have some drawbacks. "I can get away with anything," Galifianakis says. "But when I try to be sincere, people just roll their eyes." He tells a story from about 10 years ago, when he gave a toast at his little sister's wedding. "I started crying in the middle of it, because I love my sister. There were 300 people there, and they all started laughing. Same thing happened at my brother's wedding – I got choked up and everyone laughed. Except that time I made a bit out of it, because I didn't want to suffer that again."

It's a generous thing, what Galifianakis does. Whether he's asking Natalie Portman if she shaved her V for vagina or yelling on a crowded subway platform, "The choo-choo is coming! The choo-choo is coming!" what he's really doing is sharing his gift – opening the door to the wonderland that is Zachworld. *Come on in*, he's saying. *Laugh with me.*

Of course, even when the door is open, sometimes he's the only one inside. Which is also part of what makes him great. "Let me tell you about the hardest I've ever laughed by myself, ever," Galifianakis says. He was home from college; he and his parents were at church on Christmas Eve. At one point during the services, everyone gets a candle, and they all take turns lighting their neighbor's. It's supposed to represent fellowship and togetherness.

"So I get my candle lit," Galifianakis says, "and I'm trying to light my father's. But my dad has a really bad wick. He's trying and trying, but he just can't get it. Everybody's singing 'Silent Night,' and my dad is getting more and more frustrated."

He starts to giggle. "Finally, after two minutes, he gets it lit. And the timing of it was unbelievable. As *soon* as he raised his candle up – this look of elation and relief on his face – *everybody* else blew out their candles."

He's full-on howling now, laughing at the memory. "It was the most poetic thing I'd ever seen!" he says. "It was so perfect. I *screamed*." The whole congregation turned to stare at him – his mom and dad were mortified. But Galifianakis couldn't help himself. "When you get that release of laughter," he says, catching his breath and wiping a tear from his cheek, "it's just the greatest thing in the world."

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The Sound of Silence

BON IVER'S JUSTIN VERNON HAS
TRAVELED THE WORLD AND
PARTIED WITH KANYE. BUT NOW
HE JUST WANTS TO STAY HOME

***By* JOSH EELLS**

Photographs by DANNY CLINCH

Vernon on his Wisconsin property

Stereogum.com

AS YOU drive north from Milwaukee on I-94, past the Wisconsin Dells, the landscape starts to change. Rolling pastureland gives way to craggy hills, the leaves red and autumnal even in May. This is the land the glaciers didn't reach during the Ice Age – rocky bluffs unsmoothed by the massive ice sheet that moved through the state like a geological steamroller when the long winter ended and spring finally came.

A couple of hours and several deer later, at the edge of the left-hand oven mitt that is Wisconsin, you reach a town called Fall Creek – where, at the end of a cherry-tree-lined driveway, atop 10 of the tallest acres in Eau Claire County, lives Justin Vernon, the man behind indie-rock heroes Bon Iver. Standing in the doorway in jeans, a white V-neck and mismatched socks (stripes on the left; a moose and ALASKA on the right), he stoops to pick up a longhaired rescue cat named Melmon. "Welcome!" he says, extending the non-cat hand. "I'm making dinner. Is there anything you don't eat?"

Vernon, 30, steps over the pile of muddy boots by the door and into the house. He's six feet three and Norwegian-broad – he played tight end and power forward in high school – with dirty-blond hair and a woodsman's beard. Inside the house, there's wood everywhere: wood walls, wood ceiling beams, chopped firewood on the floor. The silhouette of Wisconsin is inescapable (on maps, plates, a spice rack), and the light fixtures have an antler-ish theme. Downstairs is Vernon's studio, where he recorded the band's new album, *Bon Iver*, and whose basketball-court floor he bought from a middle school in St. Paul for $200 on Craigslist.

It's a step up from the digs he had last time. The first Bon Iver (pronounced Bon Ee-*vair*) record, 2007's *For Emma, Forever Ago*, was a stripped-down masterpiece recorded with a laptop, a few guitars and a couple of mics. Vernon had been living in North Carolina, playing with his friends in a rootsy band called DeYarmond Edison and working a soul-sucking job at a sandwich shop, when he caught a frightful case of mono, lost all his money playing online poker, broke up with his bandmates and his girlfriend, and bailed back home to Wisconsin, where he retreated to his dad's North Woods hunting cabin to drink and watch lots of *Northern Exposure*. (He's a big *Northern Exposure* fan. "If I had to decide on a religion," he says, "*Northern Exposure* would probably be it. I'm not even kidding.")

Eventually he started recording songs. They were spare and mysterious, sung in a falsetto he layered into a ghostly choir. In both content and mood, they felt like winter. They were supposed to be demos, but they caught fire when he posted them online; the subsequent album went on to sell more than 300,000 copies. The record's backstory has become central to its mythology – part *Into the Wild*, part *Basement Tapes*, part Walden, part Unabomber. "But people romanticized a lot of shit," Vernon says. "They think I went up to the cabin and drank maple syrup and shot animals and wrote a record and saved my life. But it wasn't this crazy wildlife situation. I mean, I did hunt deer. A bear did steal my stew. But I had my laptop. There's a phone. There's electricity. My dad had just put in a toilet. Sometimes I would drink four beers and go to bed at 8:00."

When the record took off, crazy things began happening. He got to be pen pals with Gillian Anderson, which, for an *X-Files* fanatic who named his new studio after an Air Force compound that was featured in the show (April Base), is kind of a big deal. When Bushmills found out how much he loved Irish whiskey, he says he was offered $100,000 to be in an ad campaign: "First of all," Vernon says, "me? And second of all, no way." Then again, he said the same about writing a song for *Twilight*, which he ultimately ended up doing. He says the money he made will someday send his kids to college. At a show in Minneapolis by one of his other bands, Gayngs, Prince showed up with his Stratocaster and wanted to sit in, but Vernon was too drunk to figure out how to make it happen. "I was like, 'You picked a hell of a time to show up, dude. Can't we just jam in a different sitch?'"

But by far the craziest encounter began one day in January 2010, when Vernon got a call saying Kanye West wanted to fly him to Hawaii to help with Kanye's new album. Vernon's awesome response: "Can you see if he wants to come here?" ("I don't know why I said that," he says with a laugh. "It was kind of dickish.") Even more awesomely, Kanye said yes. But then there was a snowstorm, and his flight got canceled. "He called the next day and said, 'Why don't you just come here? It's, like, nice.'"

Vernon had been a Kanye fan since his first record, and he says the feeling was mutual: "I think he liked I had kind of a similar emotional approach to music, and that I used Auto-Tune as an instrument and a texture. It made sense." Over the course of three trips, Vernon sang on about 10 songs, of which four – including the posse cut "Monster," and "Lost in the World," which samples Bon Iver's "Woods" and which they performed at Coachella in April – made the record. In his downtime he ate breakfast with Nicki Minaj, played basketball with Kanye at the Y and smoked the finest weed in the Pacific Rim with Rick Ross. Kanye walked in and said, "This is the craziest studio in the Western world right now!"

But tonight is just another quiet evening in Fall Creek. After dinner – grouper, portobello mushrooms, a salad from the local farmers' market – Vernon washes the dishes while his girlfriend, the Canadian singer-songwriter Kathleen Edwards, brews some tea. "This fucking tea is good!" he says. "Is this the pomegranate raspberry?" Afterward, everyone, cats included, retires upstairs to watch *The Song Remains the Same*. Vernon and Edwards sit on the couch holding hands and playing iPad Scrabble. Vernon seems to be losing. "He's sold more records," Edwards says. "But I've won more Scrabble games."

THE NEXT MORNING, Vernon sleeps until almost 11. "Man," he says, lumbering into the living room in his red gym shorts. "I haven't slept past 7:30 in forever. I'm kinda jazzed about it." He fixes breakfast – cereal, espresso, yogurt – and heads into town to run some errands.

"PEOPLE THINK I WENT UP TO THE CABIN AND DRANK MAPLE SYRUP AND SHOT ANIMALS AND WROTE A RECORD AND SAVED MY LIFE."

"I have to warn you," he says as he starts his beat-up Honda CR-V. "May and June, I listen exclusively to Hot Country radio." He turns the dial, and a song about a big green tractor comes on. "Oh, hell yeah!" (He's always had eclectic taste: Growing up, his favorite bands were Primus and the Mighty Mighty Bosstones. In eighth grade, he became obsessed with the Indigo Girls, a group he loves so much he has one of their lyrics tattooed on his chest.)

We head past rust-colored barns into Eau Claire proper, driving past the hospital where Vernon was born; past his parents' old house, where he grew up rooting for the Twins (Minneapolis is 90 miles away) and dreaming of being a sportscaster; past the branch of the University of Wisconsin where he majored in comparative religion and lost his virginity in the Towers dorm (there's a song about it, "Towers," on the new record); and past the corner of Third and Lake, where some of his

Vernon in his Wisconsin studio. "It's past comfort," he says of his hometown. "I feel like it knows me."

best friends used to rent a house that later burned down, teaching him an important lesson about memories and loss. (There's a song about that, too.)

Everything he loves is in Eau Claire: Coffee at Racy's. Chinese food at Egg Roll Plus. $4 pitchers at the Joynt. He likes that he can be in the woods in 10 minutes, or at the cabin in an hour if it's deer season. He has a little blues-metal band with his buddy Brian, and talks about maybe one day starting his own venue. "It's past comfort," he says of his relationship with the place. "I feel like it knows me."

Sometimes he thinks about moving to the Twin Cities, where his brother, sister and parents all relocated. He has friends there, too, and there's a cool gallery scene. "But I kind of love being in a place where people don't know what's going on. It's kind of cool to see what you create when you live your life in Nowheresville."

After *For Emma* broke, Vernon toured America, Europe, Australia and Japan. In some ways, the new record is about the places he saw. But in a lot of ways, it's also about right here. "I think it's a lot more personal to him," says his brother-slash-manager, Nate. "I can see him somewhere else, but I think he'll always end up back here."

The first song he wrote was called "Perth," and it was inspired by a death. "We were down at my parents' house shooting the video for 'Wolves,'" Vernon says, referring to one of *For Emma*'s rawest, most affecting tracks. The director, Matt Amato, happened to be close friends with Heath Ledger.

"It was January," Vernon says, "fucking 25 below. We're out shooting, and we come back in, and his phone had been going off." Ledger, it turned out, was dead. "So I've got this guy in my house whose best friend just passed away. He's sobbing in my arms. He can't go back to L.A. because the house is under siege. Michelle Williams is calling my parents' phone. All this stuff." For the next two days, Amato drank brandy, cried and reminisced about Ledger riding horses back home in Perth. The morning he left, Vernon wrote the song's first draft.

When he recorded *For Emma*, Vernon says, "I was shatteringly alone for a pretty long time." Even though he worked with a band this time, "this was a very quiet record for me too. There were many days I spent by myself." The songs are fuller, with busier arrangements, but the self-reflection and melancholy still come through. Sometimes the themes are hard for him to articulate – they have to do with seasons, and cycles, something lost and something found. "But at least in terms of colors and awakenings," he says, "this record feels like spring."

Back at the house, Vernon laces up his running shoes for a jog. There's a two-mile loop he likes to do, down the road to the yellow sign and back. The fields smell like cow shit; he runs fast. He says he's trying to get in shape for his upcoming tour: Last time all the traveling and craziness blindsided him, but this time he wants to be ready. "It feels a little strange to me," he says, "waiting for a record to come out. I've never done this before. It's exciting."

THE NEXT DAY IS MEMORIAL Day, and it's almost comically pretty. Sunlight dawns on golden daffodils. Rye fields wave in the breeze. Vernon and a couple of friends play a shirtless round of Frisbee golf, while Edwards plants tomato seeds and plays with the cats. Later, she finds a nest of baby robins. In the afternoon, Vernon sits in his front yard and talks about his plans for the place. They want to install some solar panels, maybe do some wind power. His brother wants to build a tree bridge off the back deck and install some pontoon boats in the branches, so they can party in the sky, Ewok-style. He also wants to grow some weed. "Not much. Just, like, 10 plants. Give some to friends and stuff. Cut the drug dealers out of our lives."

I ask if he feels settled.

"I feel pretty settled that I can do music as a job," he says. "Personally, though, I feel pretty unsettled. Sometimes I miss my folks. But it's nice to come out here and have my space and share it with other people. I always wanted to live in the country, and it's happening."

Everything seems pretty groovy. So you can't help but wonder, where does all the sadness and melancholy in his songs come from? "It's a good question," Vernon says. "I don't get it sometimes either. I think that's why this feels like a spring record. Because it's not fully evolved yet – but it's on its way to something.

"It's OK to get bummed out, for sure," he adds. "But I haven't been bummed out in a long time."

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AMERICA'S MOST TWISTED CRIME FAMILY

INSIDE ONE MORMON CULT'S SECRET EMPIRE – AND THE BOYS WHO DARED TO DEFY IT

BY JESSE HYDE

THE TWO BOYS PULLED INTO THE DRIVEWAY and shifted the green Honda into park. It was February in Salt Lake, cold and gray, and in the foothills above the city, a low fog hung over the mountains. They sat there for a moment, warming their hands against the sputtering heater. Then one of them exhaled slowly, his breath shuddering in the cold air. It was time. They were finally getting even.

The well-kept yellow house sat on the corner of a tidy cul-de-sac called South Bonner Circle surrounded by a black wrought-iron fence. From the outside it seemed like a typical suburban home, offering few clues of the secrets that were contained inside. A passerby might catch a glimpse of children in the windows, but for the most part, the Young family kept to themselves. Their neighbors had no idea that the family were prominent members of the Kingston clan, the most powerful polygamist cult in America – and one of the most dangerous.

The clan, known privately as the Order, runs what prosecutors believe is one of the largest organized-crime operations in Utah, overseeing its far-flung empire from a string of secret locations and backrooms. On the surface, the operation is legit: From Salt Lake, the Order controls some 100 businesses spread out over the Western states, from a casino in California to a cattle ranch in Nevada to a factory that makes lifelike dolls in Utah. Over 75 years, the Kingstons have amassed a fortune worth an estimated $300 million, but the operation skirts the edges of the law. According to people who have left the Order, the cult exploits its 2,000 members as virtual slave labor and hides profits from tax collectors. Children born into the clan make up much of the labor force. Girls, many of them teen brides, answer phones at the Order's law office, bag groceries at its supermarket or tend to the clan's many children. Boys work its coal mine and stack boxes at Standard Restaurant Supply, a massive discount store. They are paid not in cash but in scrip, an arcane form of credit used by the Mormon pioneers that can only be redeemed at company stores. "If the Order doesn't have it," the clan teaches, "we don't need it."

The teenagers sitting in the driveway on South Bonner Circle that afternoon in 2009 knew the operation well. They belonged to the Order and

ILLUSTRATION BY SEAN MCCABE

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had toiled in the cult for years. They also knew that much of the clan's wealth was stashed inside the unassuming suburban house on the corner. One of them approached the front door while the other kept a lookout. Then, moving quickly, the boy at the door let himself in and got to work.

In the kitchen, he opened a closet and popped a hatch in the floor that led down to a dark, musty basement. There, stacked on the concrete floor, were crates filled with bars of silver. He snapped the padlock on the first crate and began stuffing the silver ingots into duffel bags, lugging them back out to the waiting Honda. By the time the teenagers sped away, they had made off with more than $80,000 in silver.

Later that afternoon, in another house across town belonging to the Order, a woman named Patty Kingston opened her closet to discover that a chest of gold coins worth as much as $5 million had vanished. In its place, someone had left a note. "Thanks," it read. "This didn't belong to you anyway."

AS BIG AS THE HEIST WAS, IT ATTRACTED ALMOST NO attention in Salt Lake. The Kingstons operate in a self-contained universe, completely cut off from the outside world. "When you're three years old, they start training you what to say if people talk to you," recalls Jeremy Tucker, a 32-year-old former member of the cult, who now works in construction. "We were taught to be polite, but to never make friends with outsiders." The clan avoids hospitals, believing government-backed doctors might inject them with a mysterious disease or demand birth records exposing the Order's lifestyle. They steer clear of banks, fearing they'll steal their money. And they avoid the police, opting to handle any disputes in their own brutal manner. One of the Order's leaders did jail time for severely beating his own daughter after she fled an arranged marriage to his brother. Boys are taught that the prophet demands absolute loyalty and that they should be prepared to defend the clan. Over the years, the Order has armed itself to ward off rivals, and once stalked and intimidated a judge who was meddling in the clan's affairs. (Paul Kingston and other leaders of the family ignored repeated requests for comment for this story.)

"I could boil down what they're about in three words," says a member who broke with the Order. "Money, sex and power. They'll do what they need to do to defend what's theirs."

After the chest of gold was stolen, suspicion among the clan's leadership immediately fell on a group of rebellious teenagers who had left the cult a few years before. One of them, Stephen Knight, made for the most unlikely of suspects. The son of the clan's prophet, Knight, then 18, had once seemed destined for a leadership role within the Order. Instead, he had walked away from the family three years earlier to make a life of his own. No evidence directly linked him to the missing gold or silver, but his father was convinced he had played a part in the thefts.

One day, not long after the gold disappeared, Knight got an anonymous phone call. His life was in danger, the voice on the other end warned. The clan believed he had their treasure, and they were sending someone to kill him.

Knight was born in Salt Lake City, the sixth child of third-generation polygamists. The Mormon Church officially banned polygamy in 1890, and some of the defiant bands of fundamentalists who refuse to give up the practice have been pushed out of the city and into the desert, where they eke out an existence in rusted-out trailers and sprawling compounds. But the Kingstons have remained in Salt Lake, operating virtually undetected in a city of more than 1 million people.

A lawyer and an accountant by trade, Stephen's father hardly looked like the sort of man who could command the unquestioned loyalty of thousands of followers. Paul Kingston wore secondhand suits that hung off his slender shoulders, and he spoke in a flat, emotionless monotone. He kept his office on a side street in central Salt Lake. It was a grimy, derelict-looking place. The roof sagged, the carpet was worn, and the place reeked of cheap cologne. Sometimes he parked his immaculately buffed burgundy Ford Thunderbird on the curb, but it was rare to see the man himself. He was usually off visiting one of his 30 or so wives, or checking on one of the clan's many businesses, or in a backroom getting his muscles rubbed in preparation for one of his painful, 40-day fasts, a purification ritual that he endured in order to get closer to God.

Kingston taught his followers that they are the literal descendants of Jesus and one of his wives, who had come down to Earth to found a race of chosen people. He also preached a bizarre extrapolation of the Book of Mormon called the White Horse Prophecy, a dreaded prediction of a cataclysmic time when the "black race" will rise up and attempt to destroy the white man, only to be thwarted by Native Americans riding to the rescue. Those in the Order, Kingston preached, are responsible for building a master race, which is why all marriages are arranged within the original four families that started the cult.

When Stephen was a boy, the clan would gather for the New Year in a warehouse in the city for its annual ritual: the numbering of the men. His father stood on the stage and called out the names of the men who were to receive one of the clan's highest honors. "Brother Ron Tucker," he would intone, "come and get your number." According to the Order's interpretation of the Book of Revelations, only 144,000 numbered men will be allowed to rule in heaven under God. Many of these men are also given "stewardship" of the Order's business holdings – sent out to run the clan's coal mine or ranches, or to oversee one of its many storefronts.

"I COULD BOIL DOWN WHAT THEY'RE ABOUT IN THREE WORDS," SAYS A FORMER MEMBER OF THE KINGSTON CLAN. "MONEY, SEX AND POWER."

That Stephen's father sat atop a mafialike organization was a secret kept from him for most of his childhood. When he was three, his mother led him into a building controlled by the clan and pointed out an intense man lifting weights in the gym. "That's your Uncle Paul," she said. (Like most kids in the clan, Stephen wasn't told who his father was until he was old enough to be trusted to lie to protect the Order.) Back then, Paul Kingston stood around five feet ten and weighed close to 200 pounds. He had yet to lose his hair, and thanks to his fanatical devotion to healthy food and alternative medicine, he had the ropy build of a well-toned athlete. He also had dozens of children – a brood that would eventually grow to around 300 – and he had a hard time telling them apart.

But it is likely that Kingston could recognize some of himself in Stephen. They both have the same high cheekbones, the same pale skin, the same wide-set eyes. Noticing Stephen, he put the barbells down and came over to the boy. He asked him if he was being obedient, then excused himself to talk to Stephen's mother. "He seemed like the most amazing guy," Stephen recalls.

It would be several more years before Stephen learned that Paul Kingston was his father, and that his mother was just one of his dad's many wives. And it would be several years after that before he stole from his father for the first time.

JESSE HYDE, *a practicing Mormon, did missionary work in Brazil, and lives and works in Salt Lake City. He wrote "Death of a Freerider" in RS 1084.*

The Prodigal Sons

(1) Stephen Knight, with girlfriend Sydney, is the son of the prophet, but left the Order and **(2)** now works on a nearby ranch. **(3)** Luke and Scott Brown (from left) stole $80,000 in silver from the clan – $5 million in gold remains missing.

WHILE HIS DAD WAS RUNNING THE ORDER FROM Salt Lake City, Stephen grew up on a cattle ranch called Washakie, near the Idaho border. Situated at the base of a rugged mountain range, the Order's spread sat in a pristine valley of glistening hayfields and open pasture. The land had once been home to the Washakie Indians, and as children, Stephen and his 15 full brothers and sisters played among the wind-swept ruins of a Native American cemetery. Their father rarely came by, and because the nearest town was 18 miles away, the kids forged a fierce bond among themselves. "We were off on our own out there and really close," Stephen says. "It felt like it was us against the world." His older brother Richard, a burly diesel mechanic, taught him how to fix cars. Another brother, Ben, showed him how to mend fences. In summer, the kids swam in the reservoir as their mother, Richaun, watched, the boys doing back flips off the rope swing into the water; at night, as the sun set behind the mountains, they all sat together to watch the clan's buffalo herd grazing in the pastures. "It was all fun," Stephen recalls. "We'd sleep on the chicken coop in the summer and shoot raccoons. Or we'd set traps and raise them as pets."

In many ways it was an idyllic childhood, except for the fact that the ranch also doubled as a work camp for disobedient clan wives and rebellious kids. The family believed that discipline would rein in the boys and that hard labor would make the girls more supplicant to their husbands back in the city. "It was a wild place," says Scott Cosgrove, a former detective with the Box Elder County Sheriff's Office, who remembers the ranch as a broken-down spread, guarded by a feral pack of boys who patrolled the fence line from the back of a pickup armed with shotguns. "The clan kids from there would come to school not properly dressed for the cold, and they were always getting in fights. You'd show up for a welfare call, or a domestic-abuse call, and it was just real run-down."

For Stephen and the other kids on the ranch, the highlight of each week came on Sundays, when they traveled the hour and a half south to Salt Lake for church. Sometimes his father read the Book of Mormon from the pulpit and talked about things regular Christians would recognize, like tithing or repentance. But mostly he talked about the history of the Order and his ancestors, the men who had started the clan.

The Order was founded by Elden Kingston, Stephen's grand-uncle, at the height of the Great Depression. As lore has it, Elden was the "one mighty and strong" predicted by Scripture, who "holding the scepter of power in his hand" would "set in order the House of God." With thick white hair, a lantern jaw and a commanding presence, he had no problem attracting followers. Like other fundamentalists of that era, he believed the Mormon Church had lost its divine authority when it renounced polygamy in 1890, so he persuaded three other families to join him in establishing their own sect. They threw away their possessions, donned matching blue overalls, and pitched canvas tents on a patch of land north of Salt Lake that would come to be known as the "Home Place."

As time passed, his dogma became even stranger. He went days at a time without eating, convinced it helped provoke visions, and believed that by "the laying on of hands" he could heal his followers from sickness and disease. He became obsessed with homeopathic treatments and herbal remedies, teaching followers that through proper diet they could "live to the age of a tree." When lightning struck a tree at the Home Place, he taught his followers that the tree had divine powers and was a gateway to heaven. His followers erected a crude stone cross nearby in his honor, covered with inscriptions of the letter "K" (for Kingdom or Kingston). His most bizarre beliefs, though, concerned the occult. When one of his favorite wives died, he missed her so much that he dug her up from her grave. He then severed her index finger, cleaned off the three bones, and carried them with him the rest of his life, believing that the totem kept her spirit with him.

When Elden died in 1948, leadership of the Order fell to Stephen's grandfather, J.O., a short, miserly man with bony shoulders and thinning hair. J.O. was just as frugal as his brother – he lived in a dilapidated shack with planks missing from the porch – but he had a better head for business. He trained the women how to rip off the government, a scheme the Order called Bleeding the Beast. They would trek into state welfare offices, their kids in tow, claiming that they had no idea who the father of their children was, or that he was a truck driver who had left them destitute. The grift was exposed decades later, in the 1980s, when the clan paid a $350,000 settlement for swindling the government through welfare fraud. Later the Order reportedly bought slot machines from mob-controlled companies.

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM RIGHT: COURTESY OF THE SALT LAKE COUNTY SHERIFF, 2; NO CREDIT, 2

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To hide the scope of his organization, J.O. took great pains to never show his wealth and taught his followers to do the same. He bragged that he had worn the same black shirt every day for a year. He also shared his brother's fascination with herbs and natural medicine. He became particularly obsessed with a plant called comfrey, which he believed would protect his clan from the nuclear war that would usher in the apocalypse. He mandated that children should drink tea brewed from the herb every morning, and that Order members should feed it to their cows.

J.O. had some 80 children by 13 wives, but his favorite was Paul, an excellent student who made friends easily. As a favored son of the prophet, Paul had the freedom to disregard the strict discipline his father imposed on other members of the Order. One day, for laughs, he and his half brother Ron Tucker stole some napalm from an Order army-supply store, drew lines of it in the street and lit it on fire as cars drove by. The boys also bought cigarettes wholesale through a small clan-owned market run by their older brother and sold them at school. "It was all just innocent teenage stuff," recalls Ron, who has since left the clan. "But within the Order, where drinking soda pop was against the rules, it was a pretty big deal."

When Paul turned 21, he married Richaun Dye. Unlike other girls in the Order, Richaun was refined – she didn't wear hand-me-downs, and at clan dances, a long line of boys waited to dance with her. "She was definitely the pick of the litter, and that's why Paul got her," Ron recalls. Paul already had two wives, but he and Richaun were married in a secret ceremony at her parents' house. J.O. presided, while Richaun's father officiated the wedding, promising the bride that if she obeyed her husband, she would be guaranteed a spot in the Celestial Kingdom, the highest level of heaven. After the wedding, Richaun chose the name Knight randomly – a practice designed to prevent prosecutors from proving that men in the Order have multiple wives.

"They seemed happy," Ron says. "I could tell she loved him, and it seemed like he loved her too." Within a year, Paul Kingston would take a fourth wife. By the time he was 30, he would have more than 10.

THE KINGSTON PATRIARCHS

The Order was founded in 1935 by **(1)** Elden Kingston. His brother **(2)** J.O. succeeded him and built a secret empire. J.O.'s son **(3)** Paul Kingston is now the clan's leader and prophet.

AS HE GREW OLDER, STEPHEN TURNED OUT TO BE as rebellious as his own father had been as a boy. The Knight brothers weren't afraid to fight, or to stand up to authority. "They were the type of kids you didn't mess with," says Robert Owen, a former member of the clan. "If you messed with one of them, you were messing with them all."

When Stephen was nine, an accident at Washakie set in motion a chain of events that would eventually prompt him to leave the cult. It was Mother's Day in 2000, and Stephen and two of his brothers were speeding up a dirt road for dinner at an aunt's house. Suddenly, Stephen's brother David lost control of the truck and it rolled over, killing David instantly. "His face was crushed," Stephen says now, matter-of-factly, his eyes going blank for a moment. "I felt for his pulse, but he was already gone."

That night, Paul Kingston arrived at the ranch. The family gathered in the living room. Still stunned at the sudden loss of their brother, Stephen and his siblings were numb with grief. Then their father said something they never expected. "This is your fault," he thundered, glaring at them. "If you were more obedient, this wouldn't have happened."

"After that, everything changed," Stephen says. "My mom was never the same. She didn't want to be in that house anymore; it reminded her of my brother." To test her devotion, Stephen's father began calling her in the middle of the night and telling her to move the family to a new location. Over the next several years, Stephen bounced from the suburbs of Salt Lake to the clan's ranch in Nevada. Consumed with guilt over his brother's death, Stephen lashed out. He picked fights at school, shot a teacher in the face with a water gun and refused to do homework or answer questions. "He was angry and confused," says a former member of the cult. "He didn't have anyone to help him process what had just happened."

Taking advantage of his status as a son of the prophet, Stephen began bending the rules even further. Because of the clan's distrust of banks, the Order had cash hidden all over the place, a poorly kept secret within the family. "They'd keep it in basements, in filing cabinets, in a big safe in one of Paul's offices," says Levi Kingston, a former clan member. "If you knew where to look – and the Knight boys did – it was easy to find." In his teens, Stephen and five of his half brothers stole $4,000 from their father. "We figured it was ours anyway," says Stephen, explaining that the clan hadn't paid the boys for bagging coal. "But we paid it all back."

Eventually, Stephen was sent back to Washakie and was placed under the supervision of his uncle, one of the family's most feared enforcers. A short, blustery man with a hair-trigger temper, Daniel Kingston had reportedly once kidnapped two boys at gunpoint and led them out to the Great Salt Lake (the charges were later dropped). At Washakie, he forced clan children to decapitate cows with chain saws to toughen them up, and sometimes beat the children for some infraction of the Order's rules like forgetting to face the Home Place three times a day and pray.

One afternoon, as Stephen and his cousin were taking a break from fixing a tractor that had broken down in a hayfield, Daniel Kingston pulled up. When he noticed that the boys had stopped working, he became enraged. He charged across the field and

COURTESY OF ROWENNA ERICKSON

started brutally beating Stephen's cousin. When he had finished, he walked toward Stephen, who was sitting on the tractor. Stephen calmly waited until his uncle got close, and then he reached behind the seat and pulled out a shotgun, leveling it at his uncle. "If you ever do that again," he said, "I'll blow your head off."

It was an astonishing moment in the history of the clan. "It empowered Stephen – before that, no one had ever stood up to Daniel Kingston or any of them," says a former member. "I think it scared them."

It was also around then that Stephen, at the age of 14, began to see the clan for what it really was. On weekends, he was sent out to work at the Order's coal mine with other teenagers. Boys as young as 14 labored in the workshop. Older teenagers were crammed five and six to a room, sleeping on the floors of trailers. According to former Order members, they worked long shifts sorting coal and operating heavy machinery in unsafe conditions. At clan gatherings, girls who were still in their teens danced with men old enough to be their uncles, whom they were sometimes forced to marry.

With the Order's leaders taking so many wives for themselves, the clan's younger men were often unable to find anyone to marry. Stephen's father seemed to marry a new girl every year, each one younger and prettier than the last. He slept with a different one each night, in accordance with their ovulation cycles, and sometimes disappeared during lunch to have sex with a favorite. While the Order preached strict abstinence to its children, forbidding even incidental contact between the sexes, there seemed to be no rules after marriage – especially for the clan's leaders. Incest is endemic in the clan, with uncles marrying much younger female relatives; in 2003, police showed up at an Order barbecue and arrested a clan member for marrying his underage cousin.

According to former members of the Order, decades of inbreeding have resulted in rampant birth defects throughout the family. Some children are born blind, others with missing fingernails or undersize heads. One baby deemed to have too many deformities was allegedly put in a shoe box and left to die. Mark Shurtleff, the Utah attorney general, has spent years investigating the clan, gathering birth certificates and genealogical data, and has come to believe that the cult is guilty of a long list of crimes, including child labor, tax evasion, welfare fraud, polygamy and the sanctioning of underage marriages to blood relatives. So far, however, despite Shurtleff's efforts, the insular and highly secretive nature of the Order has prevented him from finding sufficient evidence to bring a case strong enough to dismantle the clan.

"I strongly believe they are an organized-crime family," Shurtleff says. "When people hear 'organized crime,' they think of mobsters. I don't think they're organized crime in that regard, but the racketeering statute defines it as any conspiracy or pattern of illegal activity done in concert with others. If they are money-laundering or making money in support of polygamy and incest, then they probably meet the statute."

Stephen didn't know what the law said – he only knew that the people he loved were being abused and exploited by his own father. He no longer believed in the Order, but he knew that leaving would mean being shunned by his own family, and because he had been forbidden from making friends outside the clan, there would be few people in the world he could turn to. "It's hard to leave when that's all you've known," says one former member, who was forced to marry her cousin when she was 15. "I was scared to death when I left." From a clan ranch in Nevada, Stephen called his brother Ben, who had left the Order a few years before. While some despised Ben for his apostasy and refused to speak with him, Stephen had remained in touch with his brother.

"Come and get me," Stephen said. "I'm done with this shit."

"What took you so long?" Ben said.

LIKE OTHER TEENAGERS WHO LEAVE FUNDAMENTALIST Mormon communities, Stephen was not prepared to enter the world at large. To cope with the disorientation and loneliness of leaving one world for another, many turn to drugs. Another group of kids called the Lost Boys, who were kicked out of the polygamist cult the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, ended up on the streets of Las Vegas and Phoenix, some turning tricks for drugs like meth and heroin.

Stephen moved in with his brother. To deaden his feelings of isolation, he started smoking a lot of pot and sitting around the house all day listening to country music. "All I like to do is work on cars and hang out with friends and ride my ponies," he wrote one night on his MySpace page. "I am in love with old cars and horses. I don't really have too many friends, but the ones I do, I wouldn't trade for anything."

Among Stephen's friends were two of his cousins, Luke and Scott Brown. Short and chubby, the Brown boys looked up to the Knight brothers. Like Stephen, the boys were considered troublemakers by the Order – and like Stephen, they knew a lot about how the clan handled its money. Luke and Scott often visited the home of one of their aunts, Rachel Young. Everyone in the Order knew that she controlled the purse strings for the operation – but few were aware that she was sitting on a hidden stash of silver.

"I STRONGLY BELIEVE THEY ARE AN ORGANIZED-CRIME FAMILY," SAYS UTAH'S ATTORNEY GENERAL, WHO BELIEVES THE CULT IS GUILTY OF MANY CRIMES.

"Only the inner circle knew the hoard even existed," says Christian Kingston, a former Order member. "You had to be, like, a son of the prophet to know where it was."

On February 26th, 2009, the Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office got a call of suspicious activity in the foothills above the city. Two teenage boys had been spotted entering Rachel Young's home. They had sped off in a Honda sedan. When Rachel Young, a stern and humorless woman, got home, she discovered that several crates of silver in her basement had been pried open – whoever had robbed the place had clearly been in a hurry and had left with only a small fraction of her silver. She called her sister-in-law Patty Kingston, who lived across town. "You better check on your gold," Young told her.

As the first of Paul Kingston's many wives, Patty enjoyed a privileged role in the Order – including access to vast wealth. Hanging up the phone, she rushed to her closet. To her horror, all that remained was a ring of dust, marking the place where a chest of gold coins had once stood.

In the meantime, the police were closing in on the missing silver. A sheriff's deputy traced the license plate of the Honda to a run-down house in a working-class suburb south of the city. Pulling up, he noticed the getaway car parked in front of the house. As he talked to the woman who lived there, Luke Brown came out of the house, and his brother Scott soon joined him.

At first, the two boys denied any involvement in the break-in at Young's house. But the more the deputy pressed, the more their stories didn't add up. It didn't take long for them to break down and confess that they had robbed their aunt. The deputy opened the trunk of the Honda, where he found two [*Cont. on 99*]

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Bono and the Edge don't soar on Broadway – but they don't crash, either

Music From Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark ★★★

Interscope

BY ROB SHEFFIELD

Last Thanksgiving weekend, families across America gathered around the TV to watch *60 Minutes* and wonder the same thing: What the hell is up with U2? As Bono and the Edge previewed songs they wrote for the Broadway musical *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*, your parents probably asked you some tough questions: "Wait, these guys are still famous, right? Didn't they just make an excellent album in 2009? Aren't they in the middle of the highest-grossing tour in the history of showbiz? *Why are they doing this?*"

But that's the thing about U2: "Why are they doing this?" is their favorite question. They love to try crazy moves nobody would expect, just to see if they can get away with it. Sometimes that means trying to boogie with a single called "Discotheque." Sometimes it means letting the Edge rap. Sometimes it means emerging onstage from a 40-foot rotating lemon. That's always been a key element to U2's greatness: These lads have no fear of looking absurd on an epic scale.

Everything about the stage production of *Spider-Man* has been tinged with mythic disaster, from the $65 million budget to the way it poses the biggest health threat to arach-

Illustration by MARTIN ANSIN

nids since Raid. But if you're hoping for train wrecks on the soundtrack, you'll be disappointed, because Bono and the Edge know their songwriting, even as they tone it down for the ill-fitting medium of the Broadway show tune. For the most part, the songs come off as slightly vague sketches for U2 songs. The theater-trained singers sound stiff when they try Bono-worthy emoting. Reeve Carney, in the role of Peter Parker, has some passable growls in "Boy Falls From the Sky," but he keeps reminding you of who he isn't.

Bono and the Edge appear on "Picture This" and "Rise Above 1," which unsurprisingly are the best tracks here by a mile. The distant third-place honors go to "A Freak Like Me Needs Company," a theme for the Green Goblin. It has the album's only moments of humor, making a camp joke out of the show's backstory: "If you're looking for a night out on the town, you just found me/I'm a 65-million-dollar circus tragedy."

Several moments on *Spider-Man* – the chorus of "Rise Above 1," the guitar figure of "Bouncing Off the Walls" – remind you of U2. Sometimes they remind you of a U2 song you already love, as in the gorgeous coda to "Picture This," which revamps "The Three Sunrises" from *Wide Awake in America*. But there aren't any emotional climaxes – and those are what really make a U2 song.

No matter what happens with *Spider-Man*, it can't hurt U2 – even though this gamble makes that giant-lemon tour look like a play-it-safe move. Hell, they could have banked easier money doing *Achtung Baby: The Musical*, with giant puppets bouncing around to "The Fly." But U2 never seem satisfied taking the easy way, do they? And that's why we love them.

Key Tracks: "Rise Above 1," "Picture This"

LISTEN NOW!
Hear key tracks from these albums at rolling stone.com/albums.

BEARD TO WATCH Justin Vernon cut *Bon Iver* in a converted swimming pool.

Out of the Woods, and Into the Spotlight

Bon Iver's Justin Vernon takes rustic beauty to strange new places

Bon Iver ★★★½ Bon Iver *Jagjaguwar*

Justin Vernon's life could be the most implausible reality-TV show ever. Five years ago, he split from his beardy prog-folk band, DeYarmond Edison, and moved to a hunting cabin in Wisconsin, where he recorded a spare, falsetto-filled LP under the moniker Bon Iver. *For Emma, Forever Ago* was a beautiful record, and it earned Vernon his own cult. Then Kanye West called. Vernon worked extensively with him on *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy*, singing and co-writing. Recently, a piano prodigy named Jasmine Van den Bogaerde (stage name: Birdy) had a Top 20 U.K. hit with Vernon's "Skinny Love." The *American Idol* guest-spot invite should be arriving any day now.

Key Tracks: "Towers," "Hinnom, TX"

Vernon's latest, *Bon Iver*, was not made in a hunting cabin (for the record, it was cut in a converted swimming pool attached to a veterinarian's office). More electrified and elaborately arranged – more everything, really – than *For Emma*, but with the same woolly ambience, it shows a deeply creative guy in a newly spotlighted context. It sounds more like an exploration than a statement of purpose. But it's the searchingness that makes it potent.

Bon Iver isn't quite a crossover move. Big-pop synths appear, but more in the way a radio hit sounds leaking out of your lover's earbuds. The songs are often named for remote towns, real and imagined, where hearts get bared in unlikely juxtapositions. "Hinnom, TX" sets off brass and static bursts like distant fireworks; "Minnesota, WI" blends what sounds like banjos with gnarly bass swells and R&B horns, with Vernon singing "I'm-a lay that call back on ya" like he's covering TV on the Radio at a bluegrass jam.

It all feels like a logical progression from what came before: the Auto-Tune experiment "Woods," the baroque art-pop side project Gayngs and *For Emma*'s woodsy soul folk, which harbored a ghost of Midwestern funk. But the draw remains Vernon's raw-honey falsetto and mastery of voice processing. Check "Wash." – a plea refracted through a kaleidoscope of effects, built around piano and wrapped in gorgeous strings. Reimagining Peter Frampton's talk-boxing for iPod Touch-toting college kids, Vernon is one of our era's defining singers.

The ideas on *Bon Iver* are entrancing even when they meander, and the music is beautiful, even when it veers into schmaltz (see the Phil Collins-meets-the Alan Parsons Project "Beth/Rest," then insert wisecrack about cheese-loving Wisconsinites). And it announces Vernon as more than a bearded indie rocker with a taste for rural roots music. He's a soul auteur, and he's just getting started. WILL HERMES

D.L. ANDERSON

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TOP SINGLES

Weezer ★★½

"Paranoid Android"

Weezer don't flex their art-rock muscles often, so it's understandable they'd want to cover Radiohead's gloom anthem. At the end of their note-perfect rendition – recorded as a Web-only lark – someone says, "That was so cool." Well, sorta. But mainly boring. If they'd made it sound like a Weezer song, *that* would have been so cool. **JENNY ELISCU**

The Weeknd

★★★½

"Rolling Stone"

"I'm-a keep on smoking till I can't hit another note," sings R&B buzz magnet Abel Tesfaye on this narcotic jam (whose title refers to the Earth, not this mag). Rather than slow him down, weed seems to give him vocal superpowers, as he sends his icy croon into the stratosphere over acoustic guitar. **CHRISTIAN HOARD**

Killer Mike

★★★★ **"Ric Flair"**

Over a lip-smacking soul sample, the Atlanta rapper dispenses excellent baller advice ("You gotta politic your situations like Clinton") and laces the track with monologues from pro wrestler Flair: "I got more cars than most of you have friends." A studliness overload ensues. **JON DOLAN**

Ivy ★★★

"Distant Lights"

New York pop trio Ivy make melancholy sound chic. This new single is typically seductive: sleek beat, wistful melody and a vaguely noirish scene set by Dominique Durand in a voice pitched halfway between a coo and a sigh. **JODY ROSEN**

LISTEN NOW! Hear these and more hot new tracks at **rollingstone.com/songs.**

Coldplay's Rave-Tinged Summer Uplift

Coldplay ★★★½ "Every Teardrop Is a Waterfall"

Chris Martin says Coldplay's upcoming album is influenced by old-school New York graffiti, and in a recent photo the bandmates are dressed in neon chill-wear like they just walked off the set of *Breakin' 3: A Brit-Pop Odyssey*. But the first single doesn't go for the sound of early hip-hop so much as its sense of year-zero possibility. Over a rave-tinged keyboard melody, leavened by producer Brian Eno's rainforest-of-the-soul ambience, Martin sings of kids dancing until morning and heaven inside his headphones. When the drums kick in fully, it moves like "Sunday Bloody Sunday" by way of the Velvets' "Sunday Morning," a flag-waving ode to change-as-inspiration: "I'd rather be a comma than a full stop," Martin sings. Coming from a guy whose critics take him for a human exclamation point, it's a welcome sentiment. **J.D.**

Beyoncé's Big New Kiss-Off

Beyoncé ★★★

"Best Thing I Never Had"

"You showed your ass, and baby, I saw the real you." Beyoncé sings with monsoon fury on her new single, giving the Real Housewives of R&B the perfect pinot-grigio-powered bomb to drop before sending a 9-iron through his windshield. "Best Thing" is a welcome blast of sass after the niceties of "1 + 1." Co-written by Babyface, its balladic surge promises sunshine and unicorns, but B turns it on its ear with man-strafing soul venom; she even yanks the line "sucks to be you right now" from the bottom of the Kelly Clarkson/Katy Perry castoff pile and makes it breathe fire. **J.D.**

Lil Wayne: Unplugged

Lil Wayne ★★★½

"How to Love"

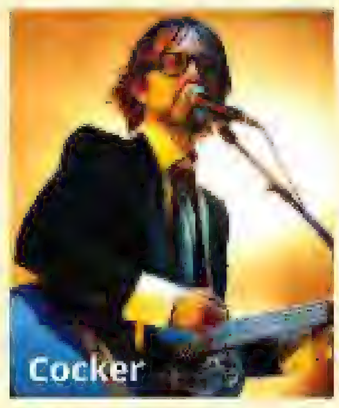
How to love? Lil Wayne has a theory. You grab an acoustic guitar. You toss in some strings. You rap a little, sing a little, whisper sweet nothings: "I admire your poppin' bottles and dippin'/Just as much as you admire bartendin' and strippin'." This *Tha Carter IV* single is a casual groundbreaker – the gentlest, most melodic rap ballad since LL Cool J's "I Need Love." Wayne sings prettily – though he uses Auto-Tune, he doesn't sound like the cyborg Weezy of "Lollipop." He even channels James Blunt. "You're beautiful/You're beautiful," he coos. "You're far from the usual." **J.R.**

BOOTLEG

Pulp

Le Bikini
Toulouse, France
May 25th

All the other legendary Nineties bands seem to have tried a reunion tour or two, but thank the gods Pulp are finally giving it a go. These Brit-pop wits chose the French town of Toulouse to start their first run of shows in nearly a decade, bringing the vintage "Common People"-era lineup back together. But Jarvis Cocker and his mates don't sound vintage – this bootleg proves their undimmed status as one of the all-time great U.K. bands, even if they never bothered trying to crack America. They kick things off with the *louche*, heavy-breathing shimmy of "Do You Remember the First Time?" and



plow through two hours of hit singles ("Disco 2000") and cult faves ("O.U." [Give, Give]), drawn mainly from their 1995 gem, *Different Class*. Hopefully, it's just a teaser for a trip to American soil later this year. You couldn't ask for a less sentimental Nineties credo than the one Cocker espouses in "Pencil Skirt": "You can tell some lies about those good times that you've had/But I've kissed your mother twice, and now I'm working on your dad." **ROB SHEFFIELD**

FROM TOP: SARAH LEE/EYEVINE; TOM WATKINS/REX USA

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The New Wireless

Streaming music directly from your iPhone, iPad or computer to your speakers is easier than ever. Here are three wireless speakers that give you big sound with no hassle

BEST BASS

▲ The Zeppelin Air *$600*

This oblong-shaped speaker set is a compact system with serious power: Driven by multiple high-end amplifiers, the Zeppelin Air gets sparkly highs and room-shaking bass. Stream your music using the built-in Apple AirPlay technology, which sends your music over a wireless connection with zero quality loss, or plug your iPod into the dock. Then throw a dance party.

BUDGET OPTION

◀ Altec Lansing Expressionist Bass *$80*

If you don't want to shell out for the latest AirPlay-compatible speakers but still want to stream music, get an Apple Airport Express ($99), a tiny Wi-Fi router with an audio-output jack. Then hook it up to any stereo or set of stand-alone speakers (like these surprisingly powerful Altec Lansings) and you're all set.

MOST SCI-FI

▲ JBL On Air *$350*

Looking like a piece of equipment from the Death Star, the JBL On Air is the most striking speaker system to allow direct streaming. It's compatible with Apple AirPlay technology, meaning you'll be able to play music off your computer, tablet or hand-held within minutes. (You can also plug in your iPod.) Equipped with dual alarms, an LCD screen and an FM radio, the JBL makes a great clock radio or small-room stereo – though you'll need something beefier for living-room listening. MIKE KOBRIN

Maybach Music Group ★★★½

Self Made Vol. 1 *Maybach*

Rick Ross shines a light on his label's new talent

In the half-decade since his debut hit, "Hustlin'," Rick Ross has grown from a second-tier drug rapper into one of hip-hop's steeliest MCs. Now he's a mogul, and by the sound of this showcase for three rappers he signed to his record label, he's a good one. Meek Mill offers gruff gangsta-isms; Wale flaunts his sleek bohemian-hardcore style on bragfests like "600 Benz." But the real find is Pill, who steps up to the major leagues without taking the street-level grit out of crack-trade tales like "Pacman." Ross pops up throughout, adding his booming voice and knack for terse disses: "Fuck a blog, dawg, 'cause one day we gon' meet." JODY ROSEN

Key Tracks: "600 Benz," "Pacman," "Fitted Cap"

Dawes ★★★

Nothing Is Wrong *ATO*

Classic-rock redux by devoted L.A. students

Dawes are steeped in rock tradition, whether backing Robbie Robertson live or working on their own: "Fire Away," from their second album, sounds like a lost B side from Jackson Browne (and features Browne himself on backing vocals). The arrangements are all vintage, the guitar leads hot, and fraternal harmonies of drummer Griffin and leader Taylor Goldsmith are gorgeous even when the lyrics strain ("Time Spent in Los Angeles" plays like a dubious come-on to a lady circa 1973). Taylor's current side project, Middle Brother, shows his wilder, less studied side; this tuneful but sometimes bland set could use more of that. WILL HERMES

Key Tracks: "Fire Away," "So Well," "Million Dollar Bill"

Owl City ★★

All Things Bright and Beautiful *Universal Republic*

More creepy candy from a suburban synth-pop naif

Listening to an Owl City song is like speed-eating a box of Girl Scout cookies: You go from tasty to pukey in minutes. Like his 2009 hit, *Ocean Eyes*, Minnesota native Adam Young's third disc is all syrupy Ben Folds-meets-Ben Gibbard vocal moves, gushy poesy and synth melodies like pink fireworks. "My rock-candy passion is bittersweet and armed to the teeth/'Cause she would rather fall in chocolate than fall in love," he sings. Young is especially fixated on romance as space travel – "Kamikaze" has a clip of Ronald Reagan speaking after the Challenger crash. It's fitting: The Gipper would get this pillow-brained romanticism. JON DOLAN

Key Tracks: "The Yacht Club," "Galaxies"

Arctic Monkeys ★★★½

Suck It and See *Domino*

Tuneful Brits make their best disc since the first one

"The Hellcat Spangled Shalala-lala," "Love Is a Laserquest," "Don't Sit Down 'Cause I've Moved Your Chair": Arctic Monkeys frontman Alex Turner stakes a claim to the title of Pop Music's Funniest Song-Titler, an honor previously held by Morrissey. The Monkeys' cheeky verbosity marks them as distinctly British, as does their preference for retro-leaning guitar pop. Hopefully, Yanks won't be put off, because this is the band's best since its 2006 debut, with punchy, punky burners, grand ballads, and, throughout, wit. "If you're gonna try and walk on water," Turner sings, "make sure you wear your comfortable shoes." J.R.

Key Tracks: "Reckless Serenade," "Love Is a Laserquest"

TOP LEFT: MICHAEL PIRROCCO

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Black Lips ★★★

Arabia Mountain *Vice*

Atlantans call Mark Ronson for a more polished freakout

You know that mixture of giddiness and dread you get right after you drop acid? On their sixth studio LP, these notoriously hard-partying psych rockers musically approximate the feeling. "Going on a future quest, surf the mountain, ride the crest," begins "New Direction," a jangly, loose-limbed tune that's among *Arabia Mountain*'s finest. The band brought in producer Mark Ronson (Amy Winehouse, Duran Duran) but seems to have been more interested in refining than reinventing: Ronson helped the Lips brighten up their sound while keeping it authentically creepy. *Arabia Mountain* does what all great psych rock ought to: It freaks you out, but in the best possible way. JENNY ELISCU

Key Tracks: "New Direction," "Family Tree"

Journey ★★

Eclipse *Nomata LLC*

On 14th disc, the proggy jams go on and on and on and on

It takes 17 minutes and 39 seconds to hit the first satisfyingly Journey-sounding moment on *Eclipse*, the band's 14th album: a soaring six-minute-plus power ballad, "Tantra." For a legacy act whose biggest new audience is "Don't Stop Believin'"-loving *Glee* fans, that's about 17 minutes too long. Journey's second disc with Filipino YouTube discovery Arnel Pineda on vocals is both grand and distractingly proggy. Pineda hits heart-stopping high notes, but guitarist Neal Schon OD's on noodly solos and chugging Nineties-style power chords. Bloat is a problem (check the Buddhist monk chants on "Resonate"), though nothing can stop "Someone," a love anthem where hard-charging guitars shove schmaltz aside. CARYN GANZ

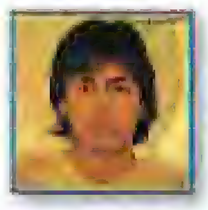
Key Tracks: "Tantra," "Someone," "To Whom It May Concern"

Paul's One-Man Band

Deluxe reissues show McCartney's DIY versatility – and his wonky side

Paul McCartney

McCartney
Hear Music/Concord
★★★½

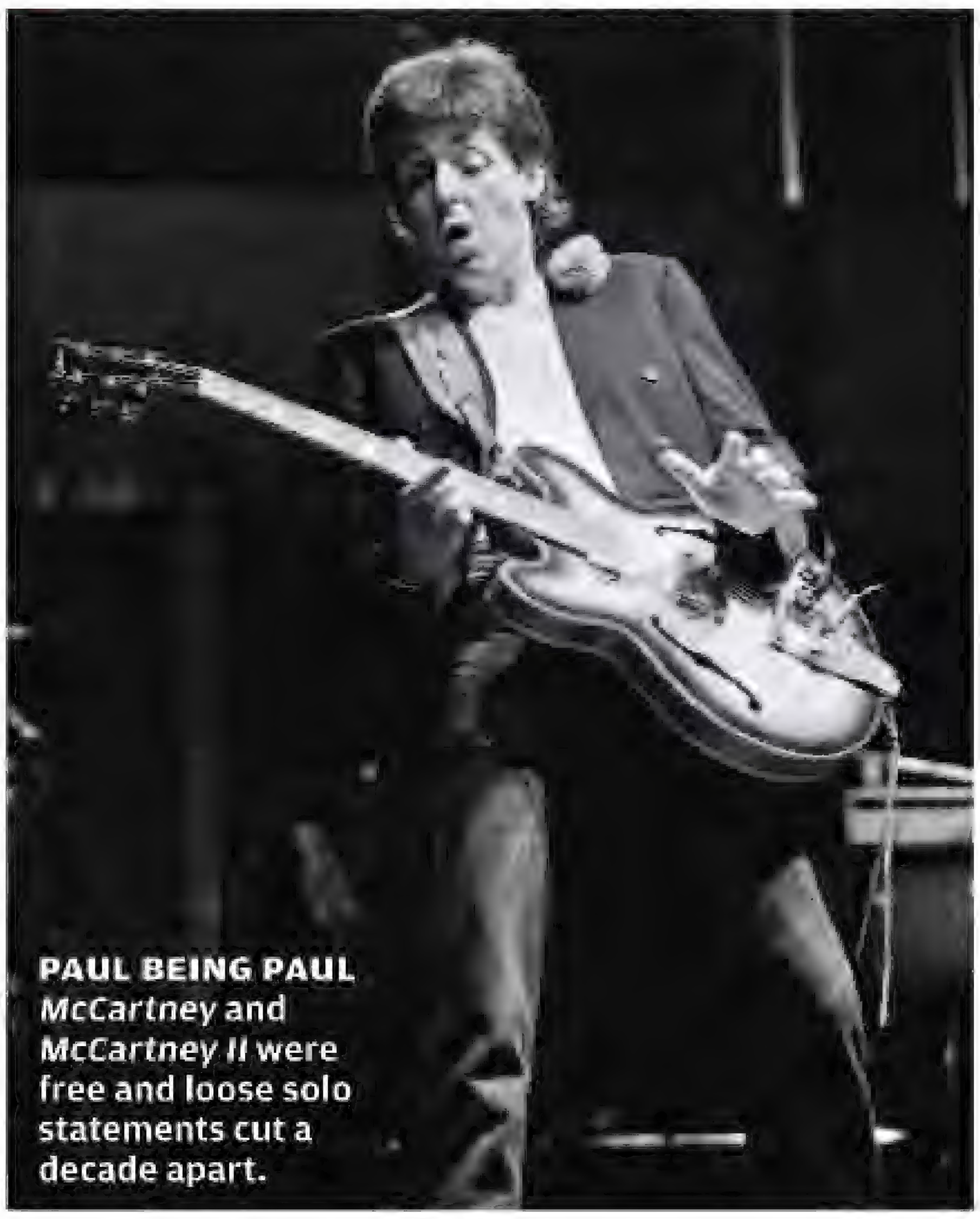


McCartney II
Hear Music/Concord
★★★

Cut a decade apart, mostly without any collaborators, these two albums feel like outtake sets, in the best possible way: music that chases any crazy idea down a dark alley. Released three weeks before *Let It Be* in 1970, *McCartney* announced Paul's love for his wife and the breakup of the Beatles. What makes it so touching is how much it tries to re-create the Fabs. McCartney played every instrument: Ringo-101 drums ("Every Night"), Harrison-ish slide ("Man We Was Lonely"), Lennon blues-rock guitar ("Oo-You"). The masterwork is "Maybe I'm Amazed"; other songs make you wonder what they might've become with his mates around.

Key Tracks: "Maybe I'm Amazed," "Waterfalls"

1980's *McCartney II*, made while Wings were on hiatus, was another purely solo effort. "Waterfalls" is a Rhodes-driven ballad that would make a great Adele cover, but what's striking is a kooky experimentalism – see the leering, Kraftwerk-y "Temporary Secretary" – that foreshadows the current era of the laptop dance-pop auteur. Both *McCartney* and *II* come in deluxe editions, appended with DVDs full of home movies and other ephemera; the best bonus track is "Suicide," a music-hall outtake that collapses under its titular metaphor. For someone who could write perfect pop songs with the effort it takes most folks to assemble a sandwich, these freewheeling records must've been fun to make. They sound like it. WILL HERMES



PAUL BEING PAUL *McCartney* and *McCartney II* were free and loose solo statements cut a decade apart.

KEVIN CUMMINS/GETTY IMAGES

Brad Paisley ★★★½

This Is Country Music
Arista Nashville

Nashville's top talent indulges corny side, slays anyway

Brad Paisley's thematic ninth studio album embraces all of what country music is today – its soul, vivid storytelling and genre clichés. The singles are ads more than songs: The title track preaches to the choir, and "Old Alabama" praises Eighties country-pop cornballs Alabama as a good-ol'-girl aphrodisiac. Elsewhere, the greatest country artist of his generation keeps it fresh, funny and guitar-heroic. "Camouflage" cannily suggests a replacement for the Confederate flag, and "Toothbrush" sounds like the result of a barroom challenge to make a profound song out of an impossibly dull object. To anyone who bet against Paisley: You lose. W.H.

Key Tracks: "Camouflage," "Toothbrush," "Working on a Tan"

Tedeschi Trucks Band ★★★★

Revelator *Sony Masterworks*

Husband and wife team up for Southern-fried soul odyssey

This meaty masterpiece is the debut of an 11-piece troupe co-led by guitarist Derek Trucks and his wife, singer-guitarist Susan Tedeschi. *Revelator* is also a turning point in Trucks' odyssey, since adolescence, toward a deep soul laced with Indo-slide ecstasy. He and Tedeschi, a perfect vocal foil, now front the best Dixie-funk family band since Delaney and Bonnie Bramlett. Trucks' serpentine curls slither alongside Tedeschi's supple cries over crosscurrents of the Meters and the Band in "Bound for Glory" and "Midnight in Harlem." And she glows with fighting desire in the swamp-Stax plea "Until You Remember," like a female Otis Redding armed with the reincarnation of Duane Allman. DAVID FRICKE

Key Tracks: "Until You Remember," "Midnight in Harlem"

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Jeff the Brotherhood

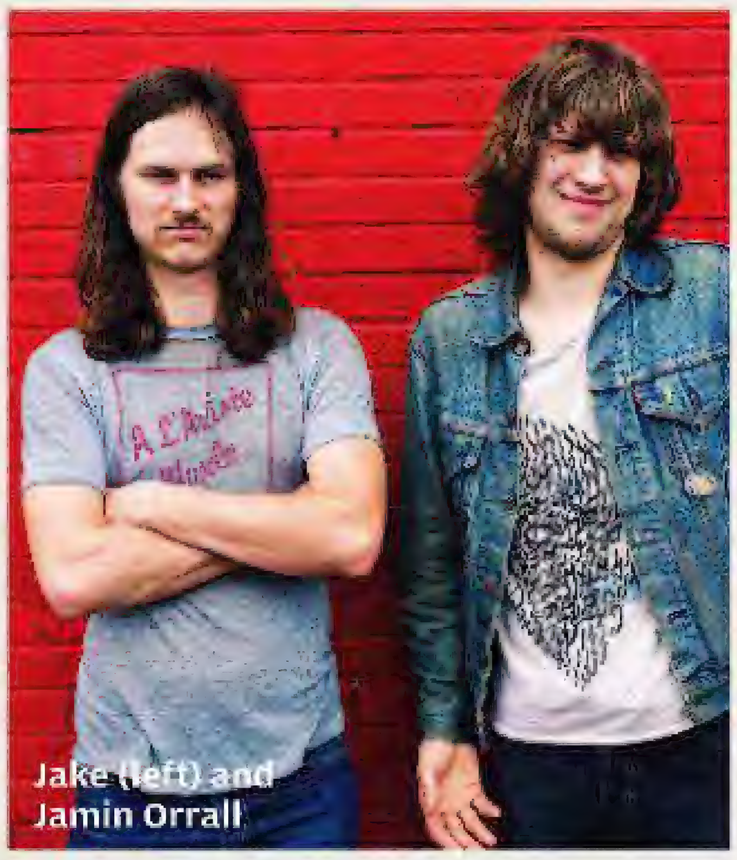
★★★½ We Are the Champions
Infinity Cat

Nashville brothers slay with lysergic garage rock

BAND TO WATCH

These brothers, neither named Jeff, take the punk-blues duo to a new low: Frontman Jake Orrall plays guitar with only three bottom strings. When he and drummer Jamin cut loose in the fuzz bullets "Cool Out" and "Ripper," Jake sounds like Johnny Ramone power-strumming a cello. The Orralls' last effort was rightly called *Heavy Days*; their songs are often just a couple of chords and high speed. But the brothers have acid on the brain, stirring harmonized distortion and sitar buzz into the boogie. And they back up the balls of this album title: The Blue Cheer-with-Neu! surge of "Mellow Out" is fast bliss. **DAVID FRICKE**

Listen to Jeff the Brotherhood and read our interview with the band at **rollingstone.com.**


Jake (left) and Jamin Orrall

KEY FACTS

Hometown Nashville
Backstory The Orrall brothers – guitarist Jake, 25, and drummer Jamin, 23 – have been touring since 2008 but have built buzz lately, thanks partly to killer South by Southwest sets in March.
Dad's in the Biz Robert Ellis Orrall, the boys' father, has produced Be Your Own Pet and written songs for Taylor Swift.
Brothers in Arms The siblings play hundreds of shows a year, sharing a van with just one friend-helper.

Marvin Gaye

★★★★★ REISSUE

What's Going On – Super Deluxe Edition *Motown/UMe*

A soul-music symphony turns 40 with lavish reissue

What's Going On is both time-stamped and timeless: a picture of Vietnam-era turmoil that will blow minds as long as there are ears. This 40th-anniversary version lives up to its bombastic billing: two CDs and a vinyl LP, plus demos, B sides and the stripped-down version of "What's Going On" that Motown refused to release. But it's the original LP (heard here in remastered form) that transfixes: Listen to Gaye's unearthly multitracked voice over the spacey gospel of "God Is Love." Greatest protest album ever made? Most stirring soul-music symphony? Yes and yes. And then some. **JODY ROSEN**

Key Tracks: "God Is Love," "What's Going On"

CHAD WADSORTH

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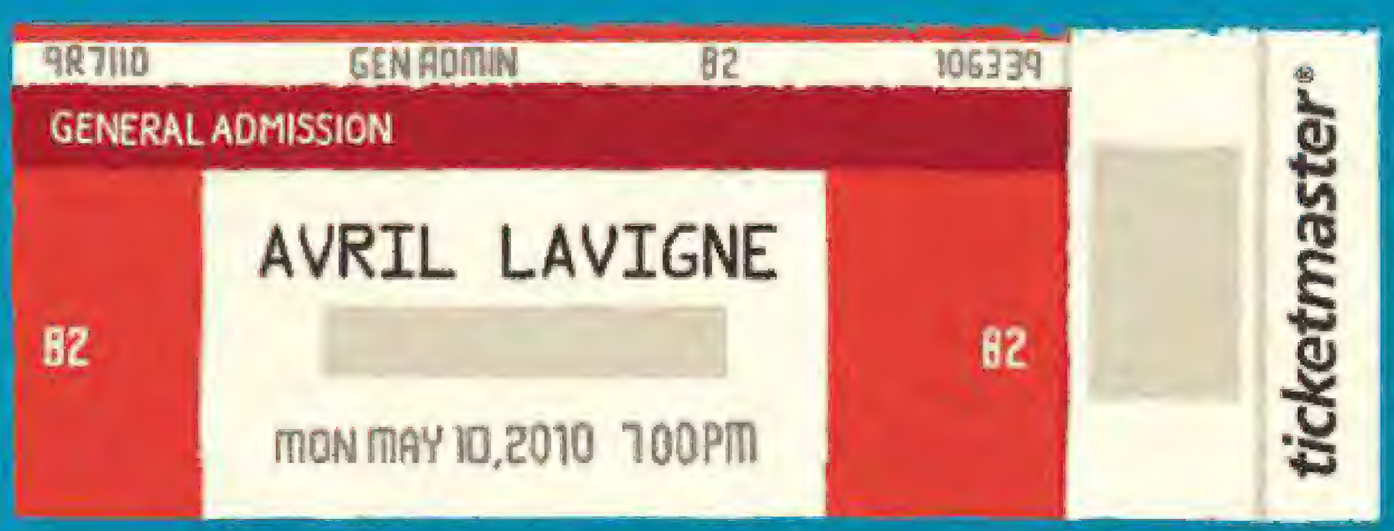

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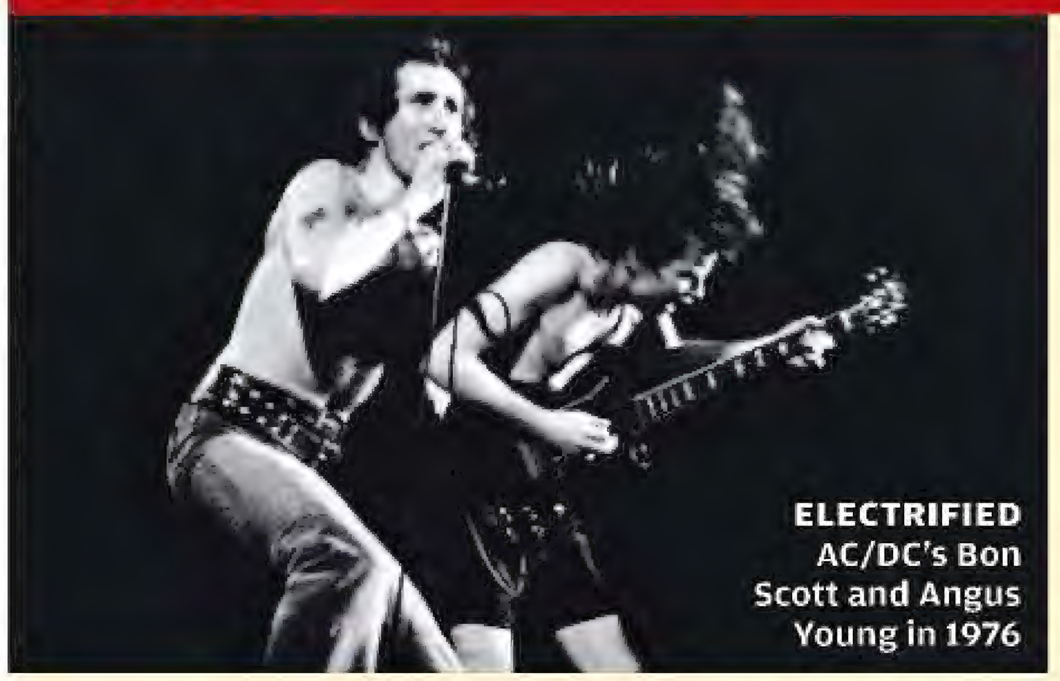
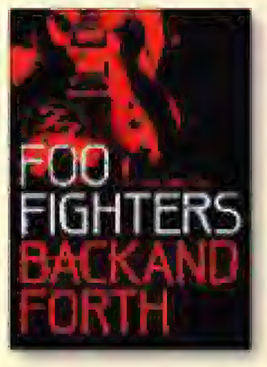


ELECTRIFIED AC/DC's Bon Scott and Angus Young in 1976

CHRIS WALTER/WIREIMAGE



Foo Fighters: Back and Forth

★★★★

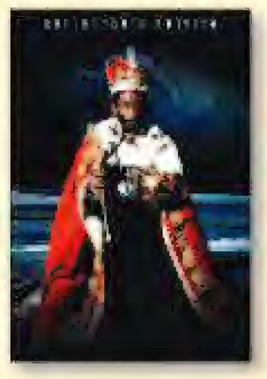
RCA/Back and Forth/Exclusive Media Group

The Foos' first movie follows a classic rockumentary arc: early success, substance-addled crisis, triumphant arena-show denouement. That Dave Grohl has lived an extraordinarily cinematic life – going from hardcore-obsessed teenager to Nirvana drummer to one of the most beloved frontmen in America – doesn't hurt. The film is stuffed with rare footage, and though it highlights Grohl's good humor, it doesn't shy away from the band's messy turnover – it's brutal to watch ex-Foos guitarist Franz Stahl recall being fired via phone. Director James Moll's past work includes 1998's Oscar-winning Holocaust doc *The Last Days* – a résumé almost as unlikely as Grohl's. **STACEY ANDERSON**

AC/DC: Let There Be Rock

★★★★★ *Warner Bros.*

Need to explain primal rock & roll to an alien life-form? Never before available on DVD, this exemplary concert film – shot in Paris in 1979, two months before Bon Scott's death – has everything he/she/it needs to know. The Australian quintet master a magical balance, sounding simultaneously out of control and in the pocket: Scott struts like a dirty peacock; Angus Young whirls around him as if he were a tornado; and the others stand their ground while a film crew captures and echoes the band's synchronistic flailing on anthems like "Shot Down in Flames." "I'm a special drunkard," the doomed star admits. This is the ultimate expression of what made Scott-era AC/DC so singular. **BARRY WALTERS**

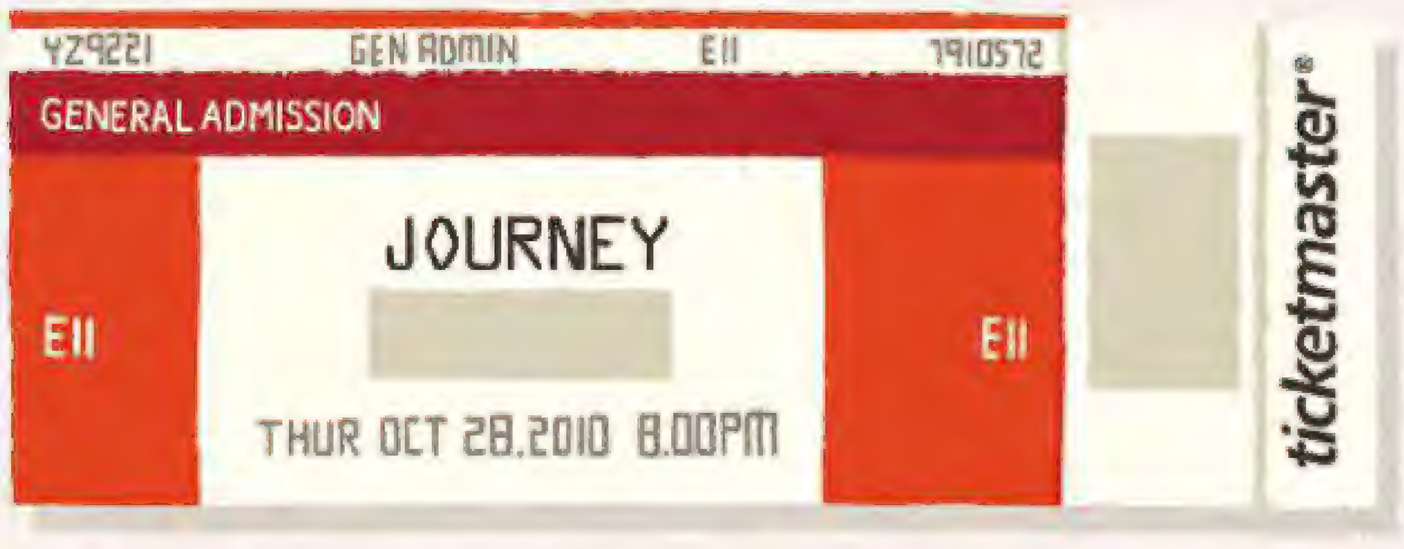


The Upsetter: The Life and Music of Lee "Scratch" Perry

★★★½ *The Upsetter Films LLC*

Jamaica-born Lee "Scratch" Perry produced Bob Marley, co-wrote Junior Murvin's "Police and Thieves" (famously covered by the Clash), and helped pioneer both reggae and its echo-laden counterpart, dub. Featuring narration from Benicio Del Toro, this fascinating doc doesn't bother substantiating the flame-haired 75-year-old's bizarre stories. Interviewed at one point with a plate of fruit sitting on his head, Perry – who has lived in Europe since the 1980s – claims to have burned down his innovative Black Ark studio so that he could be "born again." When he lights a substantial fire a few feet from his own home, the result is both entertaining and unsettling. **B.W.**

OR EVERY GENERATION



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Tom Morello: The Nightwatchman

★★★½

Union Town (EP) *New West*

Tom Morello rages against union-busting on covers EP

Inspired by protests against Wisconsin governor Scott Walker's war on collective bargaining, Tom Morello recorded this bracing benefit EP. Veering from acoustic strumming to searing electric solos, and calling on comrades like the MC5's Wayne Kramer, Morello combines "class-war classics" like "This Land Is Your Land" with originals such as "Union Song," which he cut live before thousands of protesters in Madison. When Morello declares, "If you come to strip our rights away/We'll give you hell every time," you'll know which side you're on. ANTHONY DECURTIS

Key Tracks: "I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night," "Union Song (Live)"

Teddybears ★★½

Devil's Music *Big Beat/Atlantic*

Swedish dance-pop crew is so busy it's boring

This Swedish band's dance pop is at once hyperactively attention-hungry and synthetically bland, like the soundtrack to a video game set in a Euro club. Teddybears' second U.S. release seems designed to be a coming-out party, but it's just slick hodgepodge: Cee Lo Green joins the B-52s for the New Wave-y "Cho Cha," Eve big-ups her "bionic pelvis" on "Rocket Scientist," and Wayne Coyne appears on the vaguely funny drugtronica jam "Crystal Meth Christian." There's one great song, "Cardiac Arrest," in which Robyn cuts down a drunk club girl over an electro groove and surf guitar; everyone else here feels like scenery, but she's a show-stealer. JON DOLAN

Key Tracks: "Cardiac Arrest," "Crystal Meth Christian"

Okkervil River

★★★½

I Am Very Far *Jagjaguwar*

Austin rockers deliver dark vibes, baroque jams

The sixth album from this Texas sextet opens wide on "the valley of the rock & roll dead," frontman Will Sheff baying in anguish over a booming backbeat. Past records may have favored a more literal approach, but *I Am Very Far* is dense and hallucinatory roots music: "We Need a Myth" is lavished in baroque strings, "Hanging From a Hit" is wobbly with reverb, and "Rider," with its pounding pianos, has the fevered gallop of an apocalyptic horseman. Their meaning remains tantalizingly elusive. All that's clear in *Far* is that something wicked is on its way. That its shape can't be discerned only makes the album more sinister. J. EDWARD KEYES

Key Tracks: "We Need a Myth," "Hanging From a Hit," "Rider"

Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds

★★★★½ REISSUE

The Boatman's Call *Mute*

Seductive 1997 album from rock's suavest goth

Nick Cave reinvented himself in the Nineties as the goth Sinatra, and *The Boatman's Call* is his answer to *In the Wee Small Hours*. Over spare piano, he croons of love and pain, brooding over an old flame (possibly PJ Harvey) in "West Country Girl." It's the peak of his new deluxe-reissue series, with classics like *No More Shall We Part*. The *Boatman* bonus track "Little Empty Boat" sums the man up in a heated religious debate: "Your knowledge is impressive/And your argument is good/But I am the resurrection, babe/And you're standing on my foot!" ROB SHEFFIELD

Key Tracks: "West Country Girl," "Brompton Oratory"

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Neil Young and the International Harvesters ★★★★

A Treasure *Reprise*

Live cuts from Young's country period, including never-before-heard gems

Neil Young changed guises at a furious pace in the early Eighties. In 1982, he was making vocoder-slathered New Wave; the following year, he staged a rockabilly revival. Then, in 1984, Young shifted gears toward classic country. Touring with the International Harvesters, an eight-piece group of Nashville pros, Young performed both countryfied versions of his classics and cuts from his 1985 album *Old Ways*. He also debuted five brand-new tracks that had been shelved until this live album, which cherry-picks from the Harvesters' gigs. "Amber Jean" is a lovely tribute to his newborn daughter, while "Grey Riders" is a lost epic that suggests Crazy Horse with a twang infusion. The oldies shine too: "Flying on the Ground Is Wrong" sounds as if it originated with the Flying Burrito Brothers instead of Buffalo Springfield. ANDY GREENE

Key Tracks: "Amber Jean," "Grey Riders," "Flying on the Ground Is Wrong"

Youssou N'Dour ★★★

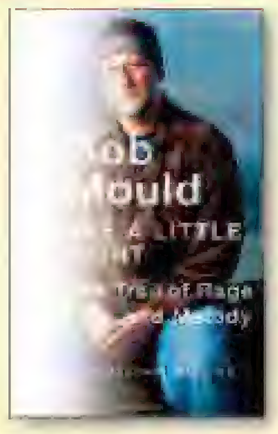
Dakar-Kingston *Emarcy/Decca*

One of world's greatest singers heads to Jamaica for Afro-reggae fusion

Motherland reggae is nothing new. But Senegal's Youssou N'Dour does it right on this pilgrimage, convening veteran Jamaican players – journeyman guitarist Earl Chinna Smith and ex-Wailer keyboardist Tyrone Downie – while bringing his own music to the table. The result blends the signature chatter of talking drums with reggae's almighty one-drop groove in service of N'Dour's voice, a precisely modulated soul instrument that has never sounded better. The album's undistinguished vocal cameos are doomed by comparison, and the arrangements veer toward the glossy. N'Dour pays respect to his heroes: "Bamba" is a praise song to African Sufi leader Cheick Ahmadou Bamba. Yet it's telling that the closing cover of Marley's "Redemption Song" doesn't take off until the Senegalese rhythms kick in at the end. Ultimately, the fusions here are the greatest tributes to reggae's immortality. WILL HERMES

Key Tracks: "Medina," "Bamba," "Diarr Diarr"

BOOKS



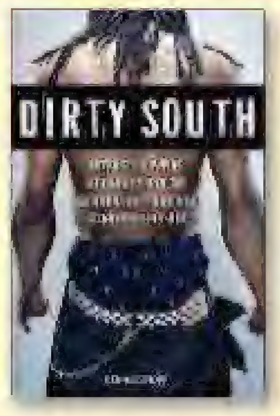
See a Little Light: The Trail of Rage and Melody

★★★½

Bob Mould With Michael Azerrad

Little, Brown and Company

Brace yourselves, headbangers: The man most responsible for the thrash 'n' bash stylings of hardcore-punk saints Hüsker Dü is one meditative memoirist. Not that Bob Mould's account of his life stints on carnage – he examines his childhood with a violent father, a *Quadrophenia*-style street brawl, a manager's suicide and an ever-corroding relationship with Dü-mate Grant Hart as though he's putting them through the paces of a lab test. Mould – who co-wrote the book with Nirvana biographer and indie-rock scholar Michael Azerrad – rhapsodizes about the Who and the Suicide Commandos; both bands clearly influenced Hüsker, whose melodic attack redefined hardcore's borders in the Eighties. Mould's homosexuality provides plot twists, but the splashy stuff has more to do with the normal histrionics of relationships (cheating, etc.) than orientation. Still, each thought pulsates with angst, and *See a Little Light* is like a quieter, wiser version of Hüsker's classic *Zen Arcade* in book form. COLIN FLEMING



Dirty South

★★★

Ben Westhoff

Chicago Review Press

In the 2000s, rap went South. After decades of dominance in New York and L.A., hip-hop's center of gravity moved below the Mason-Dixon Line – to the land of crunk and bounce, of Outkast and Lil Wayne. Ben Westhoff's brisk book tells the story of this historical shift, from the late-Eighties/early-Nineties heyday of 2 Live Crew and the Geto Boys to the present day, where rappers from Dixie control the zeitgeist and rule the charts. *Dirty South* is packed with lively reporting (Westhoff tours Bankhead, the Atlanta neighborhood that gave the world T.I. and Shawty Lo) and colorful social history (he explores the effects, physiological and cultural, of prescription cough syrup, the Houston rap scene's drug of choice). But *Dirty South* doesn't shy away from the bigger questions. Westhoff grapples with Southern rap's troubling racial politics and takes on the critics, including Ice T, who've scorned Southern rap as infantile and crassly commercial. Southern hip-hop, Westhoff shows, is a punchy regional art form that has conquered the odds – a "grassroots movement that has succeeded in spite of, not because of, the big record labels." JODY ROSEN

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SEEING THINGS Elle Fanning and Joel Courtney try to film the unknown.

Lights! Action! Aliens!

A wild ride back to the 1970s, with a Super 8 camera, to match misfits with their worst fears

Super 8 ★★★

Elle Fanning, Kyle Chandler, Joel Courtney
Directed by J.J. Abrams

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A KID with a camera finds reality rocketing beyond his eeriest alien fantasies? For answers, catch *Super 8*, a retro monster mash with a child's heart, a prodigy's unstoppable imagination and FX dazzle to spare. Writer-director J.J. Abrams and producer Steven Spielberg have tapped their youthful celluloid dreams to craft the ultimate home movie, a creature feature built to scare you silly and maybe save the world.

It seems fitting that the director of the *Star Trek* prequel would unite with the master behind *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *War of the Worlds*. Abrams was only 15 when Spielberg, two decades older and impressed by the kid's Super 8 films, hired him to organize the 8mm movies he himself made as a teen. In a sense, they both come from outer space, an obsession with sci-fi embedded in their DNA.

Set in an Ohio steel town in the summer of 1979, *Super 8* blends the fun vibe of *The Goonies* (story by Spielberg) with the parallel-universe thrills of Abrams' *Lost* and *Fringe*. The film's teen misfits are bonded by hormones and a need to connect. Newcomer Joel Courtney is stellar as Joe Lamb, 14, a boy reeling from the death of his mother and the emotional absence of his dad (Kyle Chandler), the deputy sheriff.

Filmmaking provides a harbor for Joe. But he's not the driving force behind the Super 8 camera. That would be Charles (feisty Riley Griffiths), the perfectionist auteur of their zombie movie (loved the crude footage of nails driven into the skull of the undead). Joe handles the special effects. Martin (Gabriel Basso), Preston (Zach Mills) and braces-wearing Cary (expert scene-stealer Ryan Lee) pretend to follow the leader.

New to this boys' club is Alice (Elle Fanning), a dream girl Charles recruits for the female lead. His instincts for talent are spot-on. Alice, a tomboy about to blossom, has grown a backbone from coping with her dad (Ron Eldard), who hit the bottle after Alice's mom split. Fanning, so luminous in Sofia Coppola's *Somewhere*, shines brighter here. No wonder Charles and Joe fall hard. Fanning delivers a shooting-star performance that takes you places you don't see coming.

The "*Whaaat!*" moments start with a fireball of a train wreck that explodes with sound and visual fury. Later, we'll see the same scene as recorded by the primitive Super 8 camera. The contrast is illuminating. Can you spot a monster crawling out of the wreckage?

Abrams and Spielberg don't always bring out the best in each other. The clichéd shot of children staring skyward in wonder should have died with 1991's *Hook*. And Abrams has a propensity for adding plot twists that go nowhere (hello, *Lost*). Still, *Super 8* kicks in where it counts. Pulses will pound and palms will sweat. But nothing works without a human connection. The monster that ate Manhattan in *Cloverfield*, which Abrams produced in 2008, lacked a soul. In *Super 8*, Abrams makes us care. This movie, a true beauty, will put a spell on you.

Submarine ★★★

Craig Roberts Directed by Richard Ayoade

Like *Super 8*, this astringently funny coming-of-age odyssey from writer-director Richard Ayoade is set before the era of cellphone cameras. *Submarine* ups periscope on Oliver Tate (the hypnotically morose Craig Roberts), a 15-year-old Welsh fantasist who sees his life as a home movie, creating scenarios that include his death. There are no monsters, unless you count the leatherboy life coach (Paddy Considine), whom Oliver thinks is shagging his mum (Sally Hawkins) and driving his dad (Noah Taylor) deeper into depression. He forges letters from dad to mum formally requesting sex. Hilarious. Except for a desire to sacrifice his cherry to Jordana (the wonderfully acerbic Yasmin Paige), his pyromaniac lust object, Oliver lives in his head. You can't trust a word he narrates. Ayoade, the British comic making a remarkable feature debut with his adaptation of Joe Dunthorne's 2008 novel, blends mirth and malice with deadpan brilliance.

Roberts

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Mutants, We Hardly Knew Ye

The prequel to 'X-Men' turns the tables on a faltering franchise with a fresh approach

X-Men: First Class ★★★½

Michael Fassbender, James McAvoy, Jennifer Lawrence

Directed by Matthew Vaughn

HANGING TOUGH McAvoy, Lawrence and Fassbender eye topsy-turvy Hoult.

JUST WHEN YOU WANTED TO lighten the memory load on your personal hard drive by deleting the *X-Men* franchise (yes, *The Last Stand* and *Wolverine* sucked that bad), along comes this primal blast of a prequel, a potent reminder of what jazzed us about Bryan Singer's first two *X-Men* and the Marvel comics that spawned them. *X-Men: First Class*, the fifth in the series, is directed by fresh hand Matthew Vaughn, and as *Kick-Ass* proved, he's a live wire. In this cheerfully perverse origin tale of Magneto, Professor X and their mutant team, Vaughn delivers a fireworks display of action, smarts and fun, plus a touch of class from actors who can really act.

James McAvoy as telepathic Professor X and Michael Fassbender as the metal-bending Magneto are both dynamite. They take roles created, respectively, by Patrick Stewart and Ian McKellen and give them an exuberant jolt of youth and flawed ambition. As Oxford brainiac Charles Xavier, McAvoy isn't bald, in a wheelchair or a stuffy utopian. He has one eye on a hot CIA agent (Rose Byrne) and the other on creating a society where young mutants can harness their powers and coexist with humans. This doesn't sit well with Fassbender's Erik Lehnsherr, a Holocaust survivor and the future Magneto, who'd like to see humans heel to mutants. That kind of thing can put a kink in a friendship. Luckily, the boys unite against the film's Dr. Evil, Sebastian Shaw (Kevin Bacon spewing hellfire). Set in 1962, at the height of the Cold War, the prequel dances to an irresistible James Bond vibe that Fassbender runs with in high style (Daniel Craig, watch your back). Did you know the X-Men played a key role in the Cuban Missile Crisis? You will now.

Trouble spots? Too many young mutants means that too few register. But Jennifer Lawrence, Katniss in the upcoming *Hunger Games*, defines bombshell as Raven, Xavier's adoptive sister, who shape-shifts into the blue-skinned Mystique or anyone else she fancies. Catch her in Magneto's bed – yowsa! Props to Nicholas Hoult for giving a deep-well gravity to the cerebral Hank McCoy even as he morphs into Beast. And January Jones spins her Betty Draper cool into diamond-hard ice shards as Emma Frost, Shaw's accomplice. So who cares about plot holes and a few tacky effects? Go, mutants! You just made this summer movie the badass place to be.

Gay Dad, Straight Son: A Different Love Story

Beginners ★★★

Christopher Plummer, Ewan McGregor

Directed by Mike Mills

DELICATE BUSINESS IS BEING transacted in this touchingly personal and altogether extraordinary film from writer-director Mike Mills. As Oliver, a conceptional artist, Ewan McGregor is a surrogate for Mills. The cancer-related death of his father, Hal (Christopher Plummer), has persuaded Oliver to examine his own emotional core. Only five years earlier, at 75, Hal had come out as a gay man. What did this say about Hal's marriage to Oliver's mother (Mary Page Keller) and to his workaholic father's frustratingly distant relationship to him? Oliver doesn't judge his father. He simply looks back at Hal's late-blooming openness, especially at the passion and compassion that blend in Hal's love affair with the much younger Andy (Goran Visnjic), and wonders why he's never been able to find that in himself. Mills turns *Beginners* into something more than a movie. It's a collage of collected memories of his father coupled with an art project he's developing on "The History of Sadness" and a tentative reaching out to Anna (the excellent Mélanie Laurent), a French actress perhaps looking for more than Oliver can deliver. At times, Oliver seems more comfortable with Arthur, his father's Jack Russell terrier, who speaks in witty subtitles. What may sound precious in description emerges with fervent vigor and truth onscreen. Like his wife, the artist and filmmaker Miranda July, Mills deals in unforced images and sounds that exert their own freedom. McGregor goes bone-deep in a performance of shining subtlety. And a never-better Plummer is simply stupendous, refusing any call to sentiment as he shows us Hal's resonant lunge at life. Mills works the same way. *Beginners* is one from the bruised heart.

Plummer, McGregor

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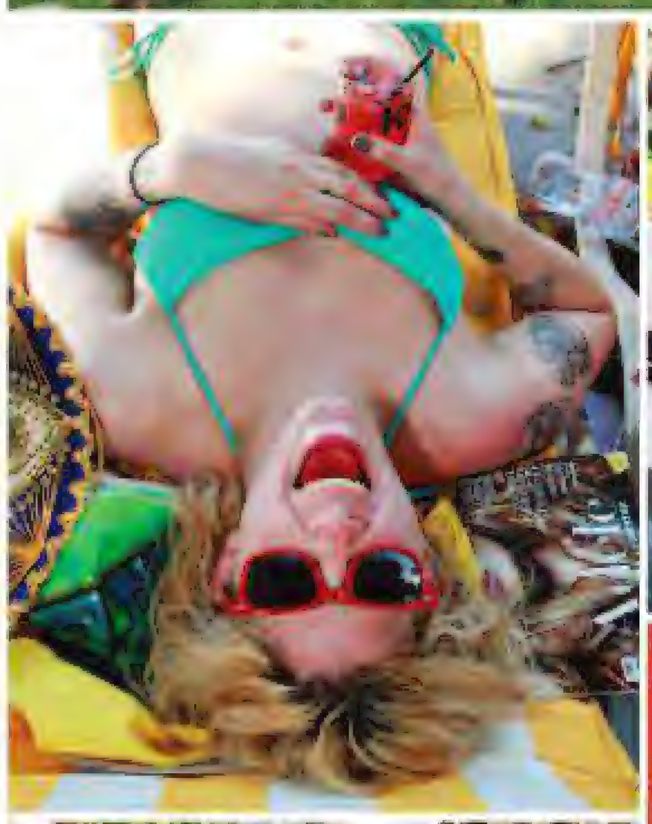

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: DJ Questlove, guests hanging out at the Escape from Indio party, fans strike a pose, Tinie Tempah, The Pains of Being Pure at Heart, festival go-er relaxing poolside.

Photos: Alys Kenny

The Rolling Stone Rock Room:
AT THE VICEROY, APRIL 2011

Against the palm tree-lined mountainous landscape, the Viceroy Palm Springs became the place to relax and unwind before hitting the desert-set music festival. The Viceroy Regency Courtyard filled up daily with festival-goers, bands, music bloggers and guests there to enjoy the scene, DJ sets, special artist interviews and performances by emerging musicians.

Friday-Sunday, the RollingStone.com editorial team sat down for one-on-one interviews with many of the festival acts including Fistful of Mercy's Dhani Harrison, Delta Spirit, Cold War Kids and Chromeo. Guests listened-in and lounged poolside while enjoying ice cream from **Ben & Jerry's**, rock star massages with **StubHub**, customized hats from **New Era**, acoustic performances with **EXPRESS** rocks artists, hairstyling and product from **Garnier Fructis**, cocktails from **Kru82** and **Fat Tire** beer.

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[*Cont. from 79*] duffel bags stuffed with silver. After the boys were taken into custody, one of their first calls was to Stephen. "We're fucked," they told their cousin.

One crime had been solved – but the chest of gold stolen from Patty Kingston's closet remained a mystery. The deputy heard the Brown boys knew who stole the gold – but suddenly, without explanation, they and everyone in the clan clammed up. "Paul was upset any of this had been reported at all," says a former member close to the boys. "The Order stays as far away as possible from police, and this was like inviting them in your front door."

With its vast wealth suddenly exposed to public view, the clan moved quickly to hush up the scandal. The Brown boys, charged with felony counts of burglary, wrote a letter to their aunt apologizing for stealing the silver in her house. She, in turn, wrote a letter to the judge on their behalf, and the case was settled without a trial. The boys were sentenced to two years of probation and taken back into the Order. Luke Brown now insists that he and his brother simply borrowed the silver, and planned to return it to their aunt later. "It wasn't like we thought about it a lot. It was a total spur of the moment thing," Brown says. "I love the Order. It's who I am."

To keep the police from prying into the matter any further, the clan also hired a private investigator to track down the missing gold. Within the clan, the pieces started to add up. The theft of the silver bars from Rachel Young's basement, they concluded, had been a copycat crime. In all likelihood, Stephen and his brothers had stolen the gold from Patty Kingston first – and then the Brown boys, in an effort to emulate their cousin's rebellious acts, had robbed their aunt weeks or even months later. Former Order members remain convinced the Knights stole the gold. "They did it," says Christian Kingston. "Everyone knows it."

After the gold disappeared, the Knight brothers suddenly seemed to have a lot of money – especially for young men on their own in the world for the first time. Unable to visit his mother, Stephen would leave a $100 bill in her mailbox or, with his brothers, buy her new furniture. "The Knight brothers were driving new trucks, and so were their friends," says Levi Kingston. "Some people say they funneled the money through Mexico. Others say they buried it out in the desert and are slowly cashing it out. If I had done it, the Order probably would have killed me. But because they were the sons of the prophet, they got away with it."

Stephen vehemently denies that he or his brothers had anything to do with the heist. "I honestly didn't even know there was any gold until they accused me of taking it," he says. These days Stephen works on a cattle ranch near the Idaho border, just down the road from where he grew up. It's a quiet, haunting place, with massive hayfields that stretch to the horizon. His arms are sunburned and his hands calloused from long days moving the irrigation pipes that water the fields. "Look around," Stephen says. "Do you think if I took $5 million in gold, I'd be working out here?"

In the months after the robbery, Stephen couldn't shake the feeling he was being watched. Mysterious cars followed his girlfriend, and he once came home to find that someone had rifled through his drawers. Then one night, a clan member called and told him that the Order planned to kill him. Terrified, he went out and bought a stash of guns to arm himself, just in case his family tried to gun him down.

"If they kill me, they kill me," says Stephen Knight, the clan's main suspect in the theft. "I've lived a good life."

Now, two years later, Stephen still sleeps with a gun near his bed. But the constant fear has subsided. "If they kill me, they kill me," he says. "I've lived a good life." Sometimes, lying in bed at night, he thinks of his brother who died not far from here, and the rest of his siblings who remain in the Order. He thinks about his mom, and wonders if she misses him. Every now and then, as he's driving around the ranch, his phone will ring. Fishing it out of his jeans, he'll recognize the number. It's his father, the prophet, calling to coax his wayward son back into the fold.

"Come back," his dad will say. "You could be such an asset to the Order."

Stephen hangs up and drives home in silence. He is not ready to forgive his father. But he hopes that one day his family will be able to forgive him for leaving them behind.

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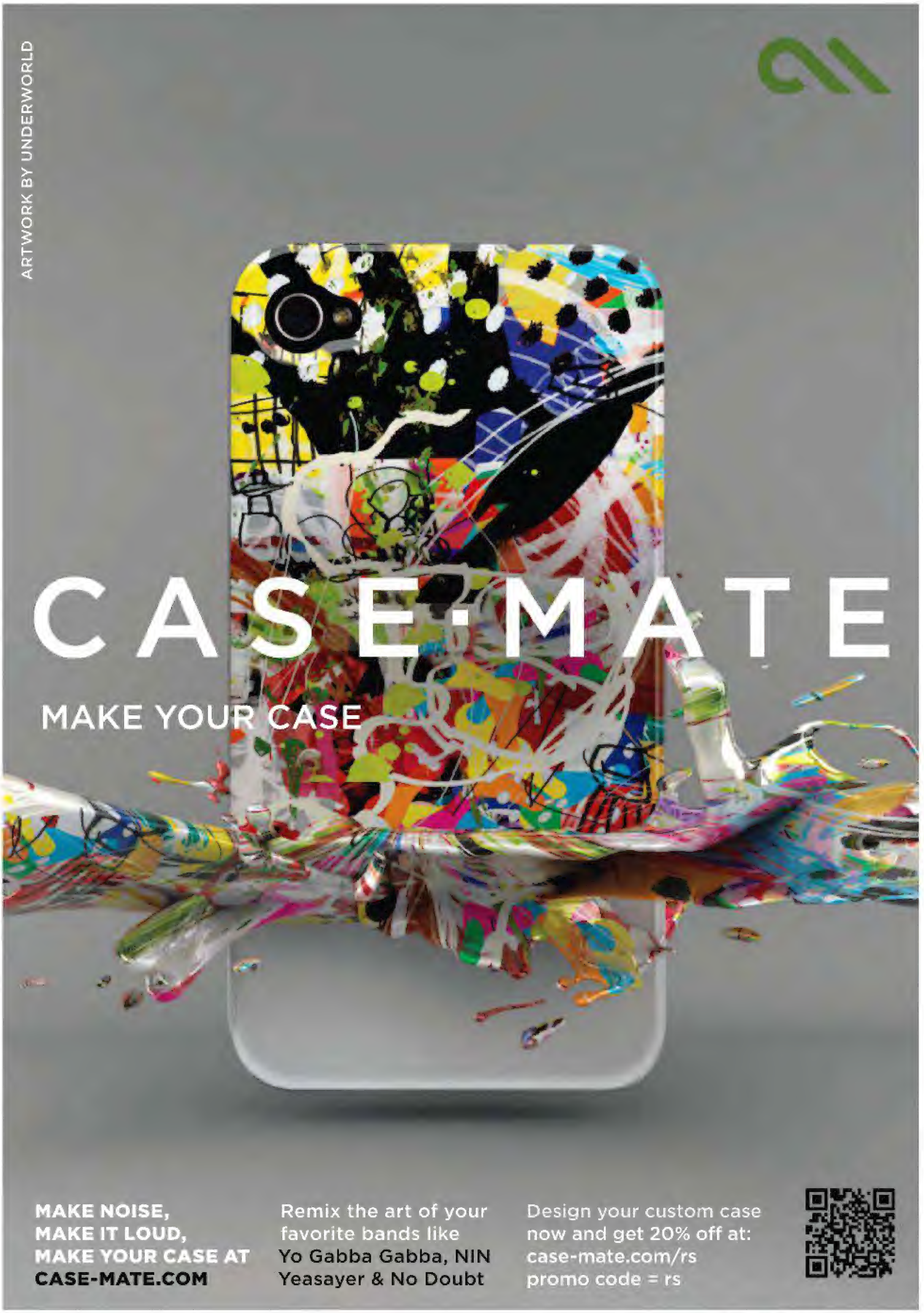

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SNOOKI'S DIET SECRET!

Another "CELEBRITY" caught cheating with controversial diet pill ZANTREX-3!!!

We all know that straight-shooting party girl Nicole "Snooki" Polizzi of MTV's *Jersey Shore* fame has fought a long-running battle with her body weight. But lately, we've noticed that Snooki's looking a little leaner and in much better shape. The rumor mill has been giving credit to her new trainer. However, Snooki recently raised eyebrows after being caught outside her gym with a bottle of Zantrex Fat Burner, an "extreme energy" supplement popular among bodybuilders and college students.

Until recently it was a little known fact that Snooki is slated to be the national spokesperson for Zantrex. However, this deal wasn't supposed to be announced until after she returns from Italy next month... a couple of dress sizes smaller. Oops!

TWITTER BOMB!

Last week, Snooki tweeted a snapshot of herself looking busty and surprisingly thin in her bedroom mirror, and take a look at what's sitting on the dresser in the photo... yep, you guessed it, the familiar bright red bottle of Zantrex-3 Fat Burner. Ladies and gentlemen, we rest our case.

So what's Snooki's real **weight-loss secret:**

The trainer, or the pills?

Our best guess is that it's a bit of both. Certainly, regular visits with a personal trainer are going to help, but it hardly seems insignificant that Snooks actually walks around with a bottle of Zantrex in her bag.

FROM "BEFORE" TO "COVER GIRL"

Zoller Laboratories, maker of original Zantrex-3 (the blue bottle) and Zantrex Fat Burner (the red bottle), claims to have sold millions of bottles over the past 7 years. The pills are favorites among the "high energy" crowd, with good reason: the formulas are packed with high-power xanthine stimulants, along with compounds which, they claim, cause "rapid weight loss" and "rapid fat loss." Available at the WalMarts of the world for under $30 dollars. Having a hard time finding Zantrex? Try their website at **Zantrex-3.com** or call **1-800-720-4576**

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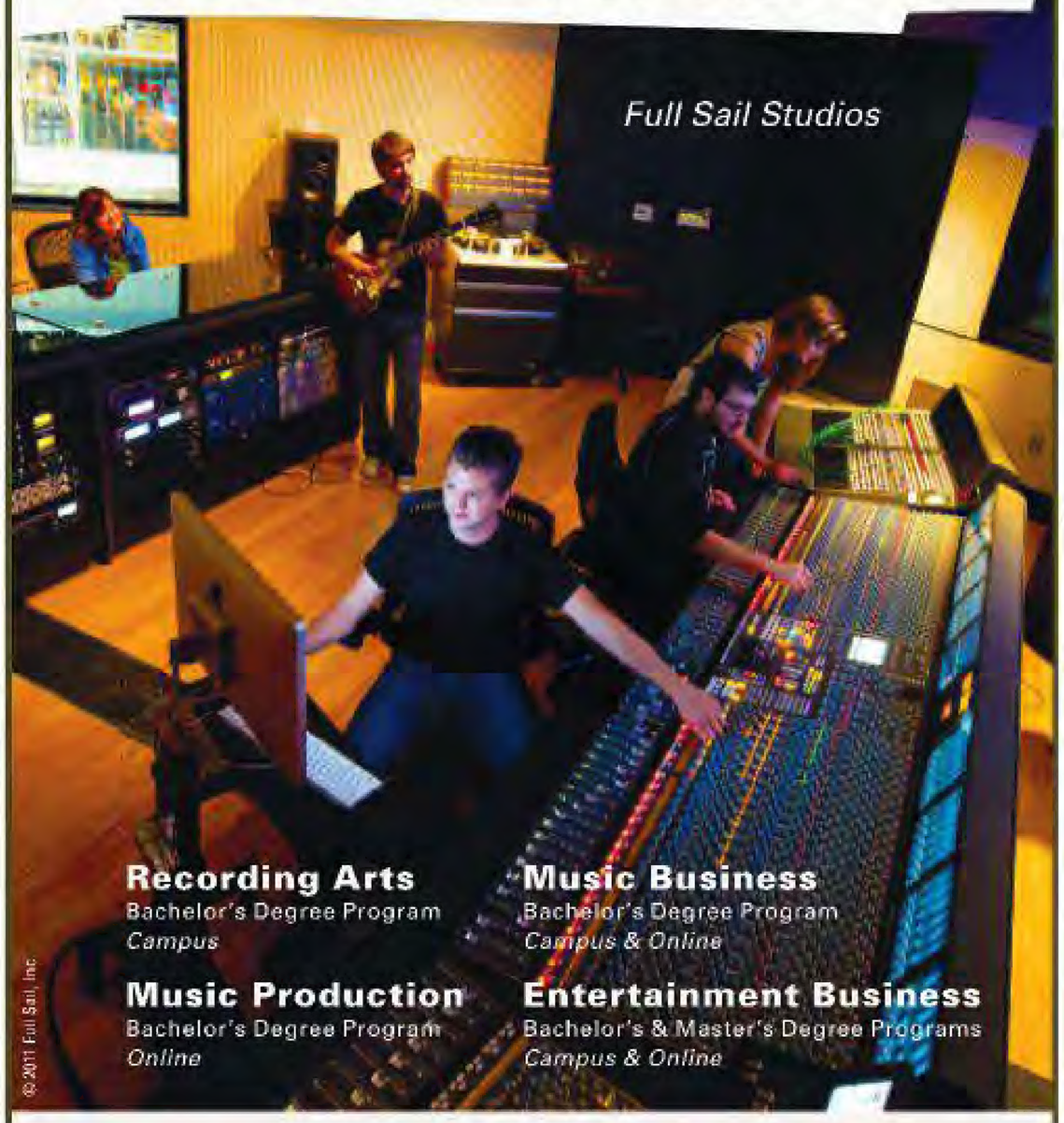

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CHARTS

iTUNES TOP 10 SONGS

1 **Adele**
"Rolling in the Deep" - *XL/Columbia*

2 **Pitbull**
"Give Me Everything" - *Mr. 305/Polo Grounds Music/J*

3 **Scotty McCreery**
"I Love You This Big" - *19 Digital Ex*

4 **Lady Gaga**
"The Edge of Glory" - *Interscope*

5 **DJ Khaled**
"I'm on One" - *Cash Money*

6 **LMFAO**
"Party Rock Anthem" - *Interscope*

7 **Bruno Mars**
"The Lazy Song" - *Elektra*

8 **Lauren Alaina**
"Like My Mother Does" - *Crain*

9 **Nicki Minaj**
"Super Bass" - *Young Money/Cash Money/Universal Motown*

10 **Jennifer Lopez**
"On the Floor" - *Island*

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COLLEGE RADIO TOP 10 ALBUMS

1 **Fleet Foxes**
Helplessness Blues - *Sub Pop*

2 **Beastie Boys**
Hot Sauce Committee Part Two - *Brooklyn Dust*

3 **Danger Mouse and Daniele Luppi**
Rome - *EMI*

4 **Thao and Mirah**
Thao and Mirah - *Kill Rock Stars*

5 **Antlers**
Burst Apart - *Frenchkiss*

6 **Panda Bear**
Tomboy - *Paw Tracks*

7 **TV on the Radio**
Nine Types of Light - *Interscope*

8 **Okkervil River**
I Am Very Far - *Jagjaguwar*

9 **Austra**
Feel It Break - *Domino*

10 **Thurston Moore**
Demolished Thoughts - *Matador*

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From the Vault

RS 215, June 17th, 1976

TOP 10 SINGLES

1 **Wings**
"Silly Love Songs" - *Capitol*

2 **Silver Convention**
"Get Up and Boogie (That's Right)" - *Midland International*

3 **Dorothy Moore**
"Misty Blue" - *Malaco*

4 **Diana Ross**
"Love Hangover" - *Motown*

5 **Daryl Hall and John Oates**
"Sara Smile" - *RCA*

6 **Henry Gross**
"Shannon" - *Lifesong*

7 **Captain and Tennille**
"Shop Around" - *A&M*

8 **Andrea True Connection**
"More, More, More (Pt. 1)" - *Buddha*

9 **Starland Vocal Band**
"Afternoon Delight" - *Windsong*

10 **The Brothers Johnson**
"I'll Be Good to You" - *A&M*

On the Cover

"If any [Beatles] come to a show, they feel like they've got to get up onstage. [If] they get up, we've got to be good. Can't just get up and be *crummy*, then they say, 'The Beatles really blew it on the Wings tour.' . . . If John feels like coming out, great, we'll try and get him in." —*Paul McCartney*

Top 40 Albums

1	NEW	**Lady Gaga**	Born This Way - *Streamline/KonLive/Interscope*
2	NEW	**Brad Paisley**	This Is Country Music - *Arista Nashville*
3	1	**Adele**	21 - *XL/Columbia*
4	NEW	**Glee: The Music**	Season Two, Volume 6 - *20th Century Fox TV/Columbia*
5	NEW	**Maybach Music Group**	Presents: Self Made Vol. 1 - *Maybach*
6	3	**NOW 38**	Various Artists - *Universal/EMI/Sony Music*
7	NEW	**NKOTBSB**	NKOTBSB - *Columbia/Jive/Legacy*
8	NEW	**Foster the People**	Torches - *StarTime/Columbia*
9	4	**Jason Aldean**	My Kinda Party - *Broken Bow*
10	5	**Mumford & Sons**	Sigh No More - *Glassnote*
11	2	**Seether**	Holding Onto Strings Better Left to Fray - *Wind-up*
12	NEW	**Scotty McCreery**	American Idol Season 10: Scotty McCreery - *19 Digital Ex*
13	NEW	**Journey**	Eclipse - *Nomota Ex*
14	6	**Beastie Boys**	Hot Sauce Committee Part Two - *Brooklyn Dust*
15	10	**Il Volo**	Il Volo - *Opera Blues/Gatica/Rentor/Geffen*
16	36 ↑	**Lady Gaga**	The Fame - *Streamline/KonLive/Cherrytree/Interscope*
17	17	**Lemonade Mouth**	Soundtrack - *Walt Disney*
18	12	**Jennifer Lopez**	Love? - *Island*
19	25	**Katy Perry**	Teenage Dream - *Capitol*
20	18	**Bruno Mars**	Doo-Wops & Hooligans - *Elektra*
21	16	**Adele**	19 - *XL/Columbia*
22	9	**Fleet Foxes**	Helplessness Blues - *Sub Pop*
23	8	**Justin Bieber**	Never Say Never: The Remixes (EP) - *RBMG/Island*
24	35	**Zac Brown Band**	You Get What You Give - *Southern Ground/Roar/Bigger Picture/Atlantic*
25	47	**Rascal Flatts**	Nothing Like This - *Big Machine*
26	30	**Taylor Swift**	Speak Now - *Big Machine*
27	7	**The Lonely Island**	Turtleneck & Chain - *Universal Republic*
28	26	**Wiz Khalifa**	Rolling Papers - *Rostrum/Atlantic*
29	23	**Chris Brown**	F.A.M.E. - *Jive*
30	38	**Rihanna**	Loud - *Def Jam*
31	20	**Foo Fighters**	Wasting Light - *Roswell/RCA*
32	14	**Christina Perri**	Lovestrong - *Atlantic*
33	37	**Nicki Minaj**	Pink Friday - *Young Money/Cash Money/Universal Motown*
34	34	**Britney Spears**	Femme Fatale - *Jive*
35	22	**Justin Bieber**	My World 2.0 - *RBMG/Island*
36	39	**Kirk Franklin**	Hello Fear - *Fo Yo Soul/Verity*
37	40	**Glee: The Music Presents**	The Warblers - *20th Century Fox TV/Columbia*
38	44	**The Band Perry**	The Band Perry - *Republic Nashville*
39	33	**Pink**	Greatest Hits . . . So Far!!! - *LaFace*
40	NEW	**Jadakiss**	I Love You (A Dedication to My Fans): The Mixtape - *Def Jam*

Oh, My Gaga

Gaga's latest, thanks in part to Amazon's 99-cent sale, sold 1.1 million in its first week – more than any album since 50 Cent's *The Massacre* in 2005.

Made Men

Rick Ross introduced his MMG posse – D.C.'s Wale, Atlanta's Pill and Philly's Meek Mill – with a group album that sold 59,000 copies in Week One.

Block Party

New Kids and Backstreet Boys – currently selling out arenas – joined forces for a best-of LP with three new jams. It sold 40,000 copies in its first week.

Up With People

The dreamy radio hit "Pumped Up Kicks" helped L.A. indie crew Foster the People sell 33,000 copies of their debut in its first week out.

00 Chart position on June 1st, 2011
00 Chart position on May 25th, 2011
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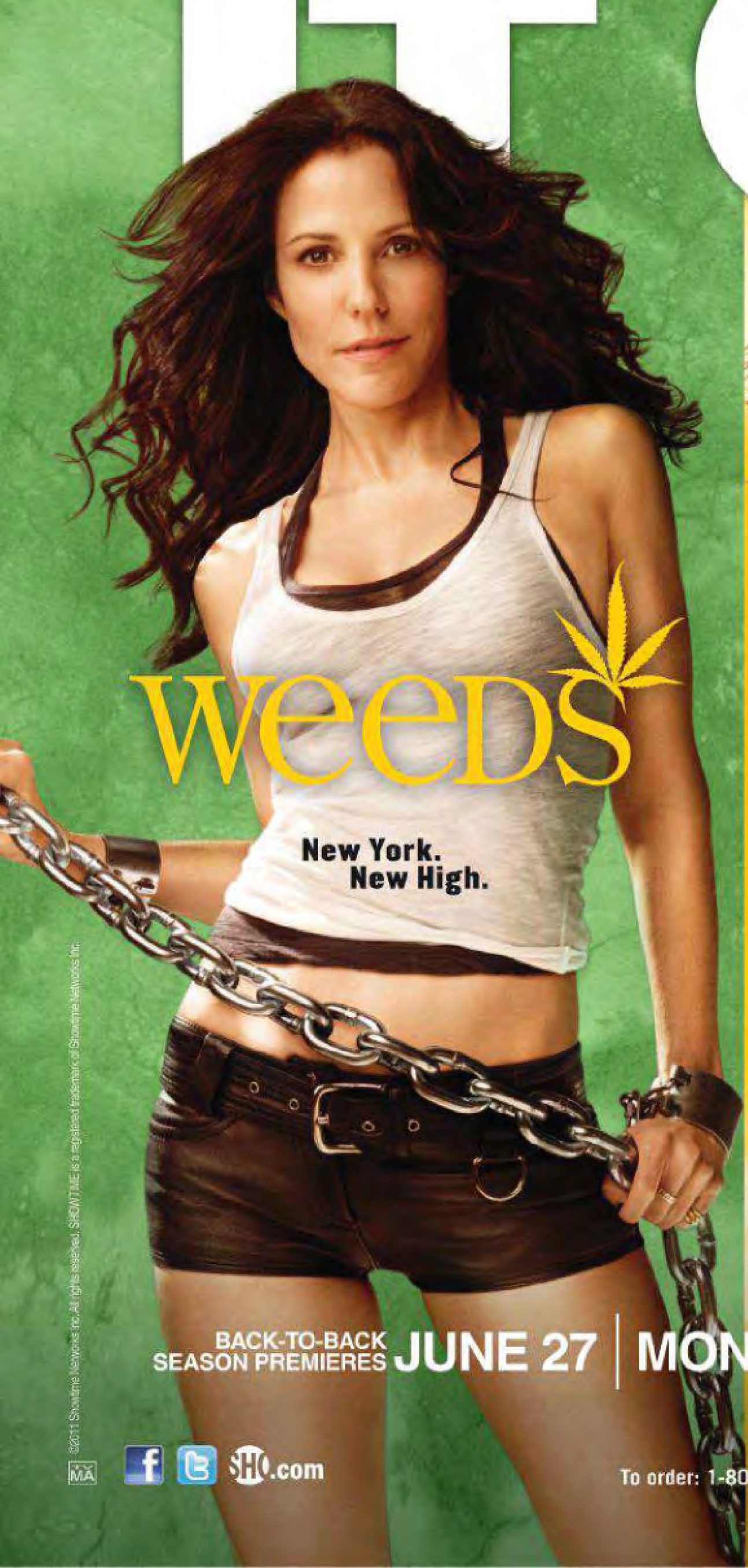

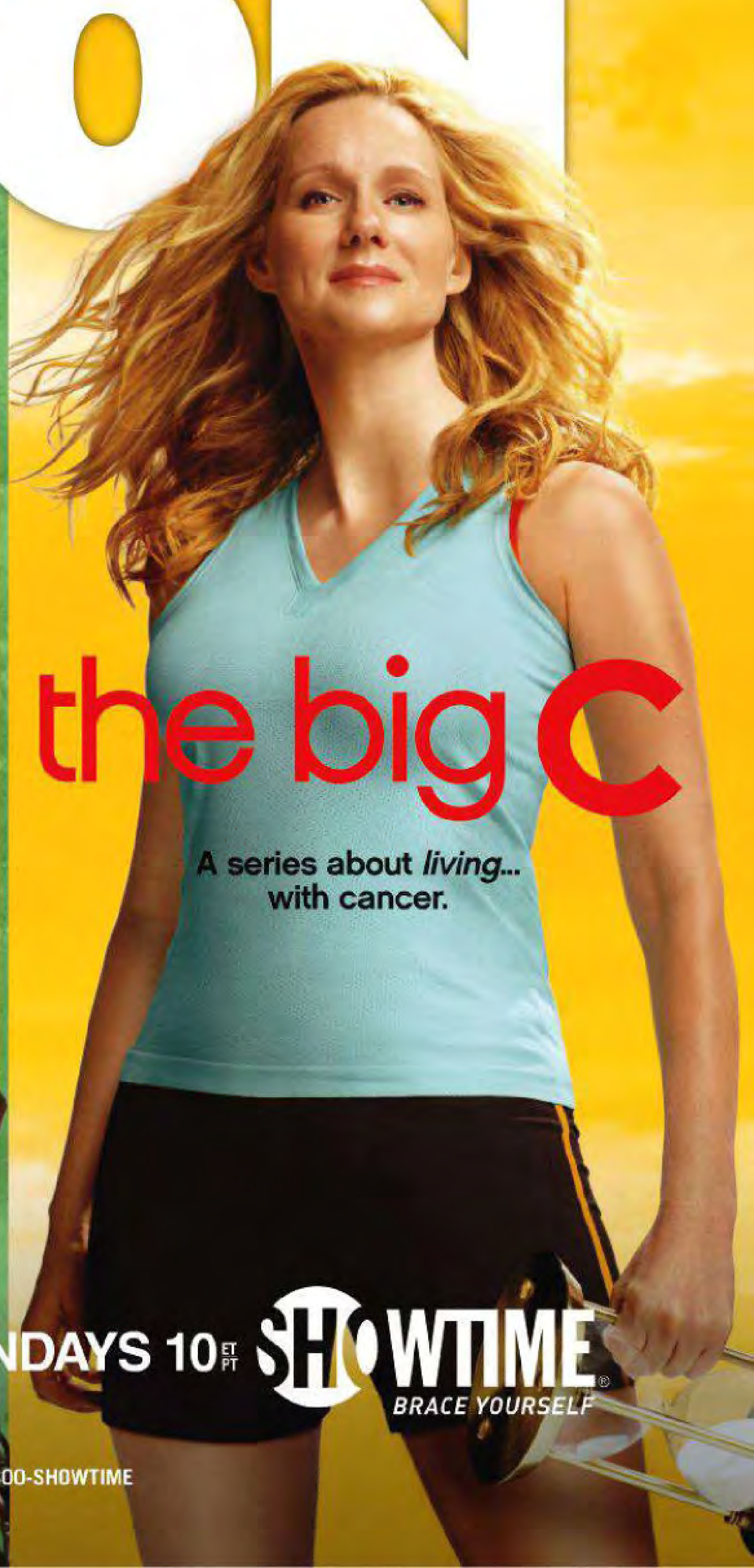

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